

**2024**

**Business Plan**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

Development Approvals

# DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Development Approvals Department is responsible for business licensing, building permitting, subdivision, development permits, rezoning, as well as approval of development related engineering works and environmental and tree management.

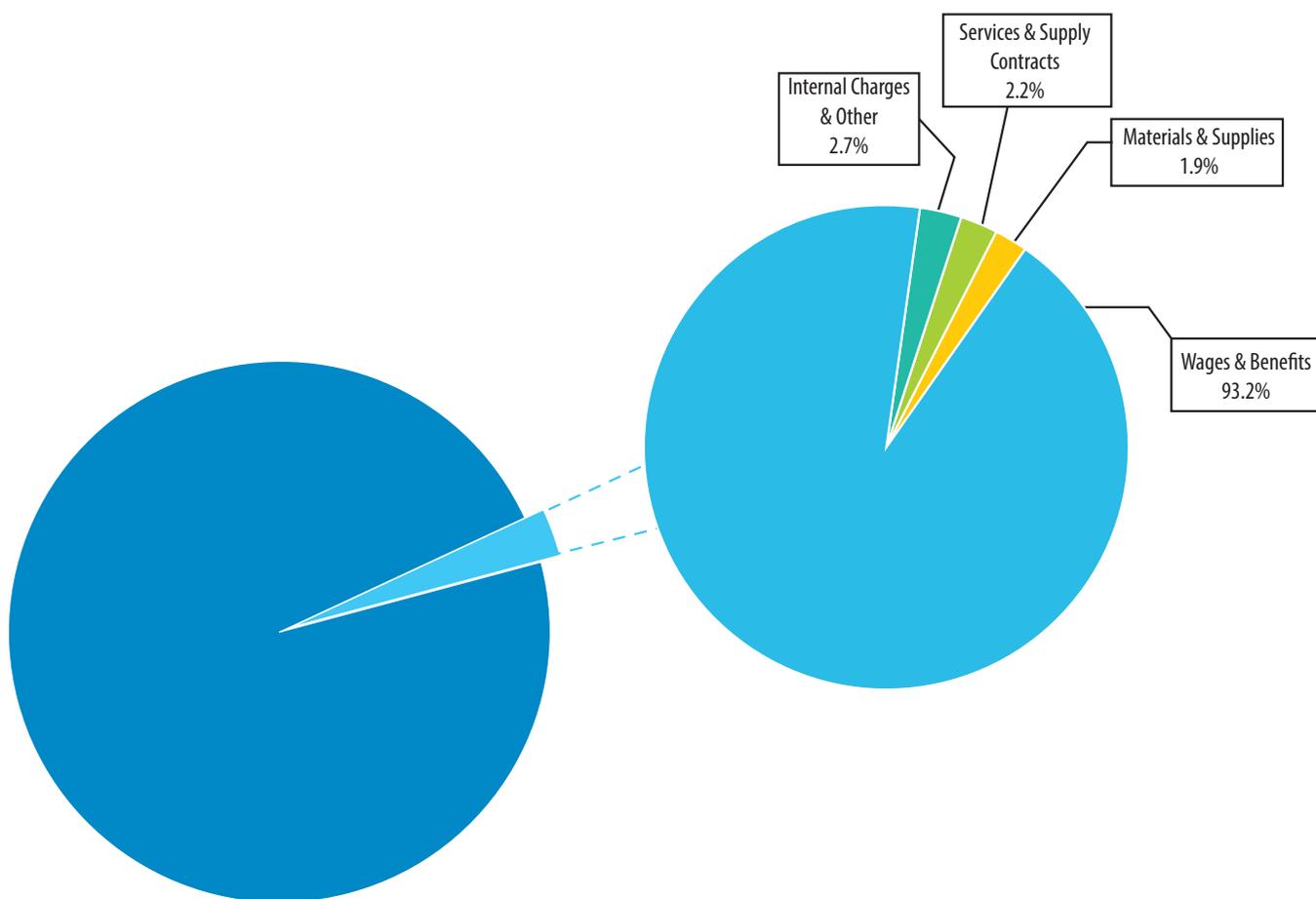
Development Approvals staff support Council in making land use and development approval decisions, as well as decisions on policies and regulations related to development and environmental protection.

Development Approvals staff interact with many community and development industry stakeholders and City departments to build a well-designed, healthy and prosperous community.

The Core Services are:

- Business Licensing & Permit Centre
- Current Planning
- Subdivision
- Development Engineering & Environmental Protection
- Building Inspections

# DEPARTMENT'S SHARE OF THE BUDGET



■ DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS 3.0%  
■ REMAINING CITY BUDGET 97.0%

**Operating Expenditure Budget:**  
\$ 5,866,504

General Manager, Development Services

Admin Coordinator

Admin Staff  
(4 FTEs)

Director, Development Approvals

Manager, Permit Centre and Business Licensing

Manager, Subdivision

Manager, Engineering & Environment

Manager, Building Inspections

Manager, Current Planning

Permit Centre & Business Licensing  
(4 FTEs)

Subdivision  
(3 FTEs)

Engineering & Environment  
(7 FTEs)

Supervisors, Building Inspections  
(3 FTEs)

Current Planning  
(7 FTEs)

Building Inspections  
(14 FTEs)

# LEVEL OF SERVICE

## Business Licensing & Permit Centre

- Administer business licences for the municipality, including co-operation with the inter-community business licence cooperative of Vancouver Island
- Provide support and assistance to the Economic Development Section with regard to business licence data
- Provide front-line service for customers in the Service and Resource Centre building with support from representatives from each Development Services section
- Provide support and assistance to the Building Inspections Section with regard to building permit application and issuance processes

## Current Planning

- Administer development related bylaws including the Zoning Bylaw, Parking Bylaw, and Sign Bylaw
  - Administer the Development Permit Area Guidelines
  - Process development-related applications including Official Community Plan amendments, rezonings, temporary use permits, covenant amendments, development permits and development variance permits
  - Process applications for the Board of Variance
  - Process applications for liquor licences, sign permits, telecommunications facilities and Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
  - Review business license applications for compliance with Zoning Bylaw and applicable land use regulations
- Committees: Design Advisory Panel, Board of Variance

## Development Engineering & Environmental Protection

- Administer the Development Cost Charge Bylaw
- Review and coordinate development-driven engineering works
- Process works-in-city-streets permits, fill permits
- Administer and enforce the Tree Protection Bylaw
- Maintain statistics for the value of civil works constructed through development
- Develop environmental protection policies for the City

## Subdivision

- Administer the Subdivision Control Bylaw.
- Review subdivision applications for compliance with Federal and Provincial statutes and regulations and municipal bylaws.
- Process development permit, development variance permit and minor rezoning applications required for subdivision approval.
- Administer applications for subdivision approval under the Land Title Act, Strata Property Act and Local Government Act.

## Building Inspections

- Administer the BC Building Code and the Building Bylaw
- Process applications for building permits
- Perform building permit-related inspections
- Conduct complaint-driven building violation inspections
- Conduct over 13,000 inspections each year



# 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

## **Development Activity**

Development activity in Nanaimo remains strong. Significant zoning amendment applications under review in 2023 include two supportive housing MOU sites, Te'tuxwtun and Sandstone. Building permits were issued for over \$222M in total construction value achieved by the end of September 2023. This includes building permits for 606 new residential units, with 800 units projected by the end of 2023.

## **Permitting Approvals Modernization Software – Phase 1**

As part of its efforts toward continuous improvement, the City of Nanaimo is modernizing its permitting and approvals software. Clariti has been selected as the software and cloud-based application portal to replace the City's legacy development approvals software platform. A phased approach to implementation has been selected to fit within grant funding and time limits and to maximize improvements in approval timelines and efficiency.

Phase 1 includes implementation of approvals for complex commercial, multi-family and industrial developments and has been scheduled for completion in 2023. This has been a major priority initiative for Development Approvals in 2023, supported substantially by the IT department.

## **Planning Function Review**

The City has engaged Neilson Strategies, Inc. to undertake a Development Approvals Process Review in 2023 focused on planning approvals and processes. The purpose of the review is to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the development approvals process with the overall goal to enhance customer experience and reduce approval timelines. The review involves several components, including a legislative, peer municipality and best practices review, internal interviews, internal process audit and interviews with external customers and industry representatives.

## **Procedures Bylaw Update**

The Development Approval Procedures and Notification Bylaw, which was adopted in 1991, requires review and update to ensure that development approval procedures and notification requirements are clear, accurately reference appropriate legislation and reflect community interests. Review will be complete in 2023, with changes being implemented in 2024.

## **BC Housing MOU Implementation**

Implementation of existing BC Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) projects to provide affordable and supportive housing has been a focus of Development Approvals work in 2023. The supportive housing MOU project at 355 Nicol Street was introduced for Council consideration of rezoning in June 2023. The zoning amendment for the supportive housing MOU project at 250 Terminal Avenue was also under review in 2023. The Te'tuxwtun OCP and zoning amendment bylaws were introduced for Council consideration in August 2023 and support Integrated Action Plan Action #116: – Fifth Street Properties Project.

## **Affordable Housing**

In collaboration with Community Planning, conducted a public consultation process to present affordable housing initiatives to expand opportunities for infill housing in existing neighbourhoods, and to expand opportunities for secondary suites and detached suites in the city.

## **Tree Voucher Program**

A tree planting rebate program was established in 2017 to help increase the overall forest canopy on private lands. Funding comes from deferred revenue from fines, cash-in-lieu payments for loss of significant trees, as well as revenue received during the subdivision process as cash-in-lieu payment for tree replacement planting requirements. The program is increasingly popular and contributed to the planting of approximately 4,500 trees on private land from 2017 through 2022. An additional 735 tree voucher applications for a total of 1,239 vouchers were received by the end of September 2023.

## **Step Code Implementation**

Supported Sustainability Section in Nanaimo's Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon implementation strategy, to ensure higher Step Code compliance requirements come into effect before the Provincial mandated implementation timelines. This project aligns with Integrated Action Plan action 3.

## **Subdivision Control Bylaw Update**

The City's Subdivision Control Bylaw is in need of a larger update to ensure that it is clear on the City's requirements for subdivision approval and reflects current legislative requirements and best practices. With the recent update to Schedule A of the Bylaw (MOESS), as well as new direction provided by City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined, there is need for an overall update to the Bylaw. Bylaw review was underway in 2023 and will continue in 2024.

# 2024 CONSIDERATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## Staffing

The City of Nanaimo is currently experiencing a multi-year development boom, with 2023 being another strong year for construction. The sustained pace of development has been coupled with an increase in the complexity of files and challenges filling key technical positions. Retaining qualified and experienced staff as well as expanding capacity for staffing in Development Approvals is essential moving forward.

## Planning Function Review Implementation

The recommendations of the Planning Function Review, which is scheduled for completion in 2023, is expected to identify opportunities and considerations for Development Approvals in 2024 and beyond.

## Digital Pilot Project

The City of Nanaimo is participating in Digital Building Permit Submission Tool – Pilot Partnership on invitation from the Ministry of Housing. The City’s participation supports the Province in guiding the digital transformation of building permit services in B.C. The Pilot Partnership is commencing in October 2023 and is expected to develop and pilot a new building permit submission and Building Code compliance tool by March 2024. This is envisioned to be a pre-application screening tool for development industry to validate completeness applications prior to submission. This Provincial initiative aligns well with other initiatives already completed or underway by the City.

## Permitting and Approvals Modernization Software - Phase 2

Phase 2 of the Permitting and Approvals Modernization Software is expected to be a significant focus for Development Approvals in 2024. This project includes implementation of approvals for all remaining permit and application types following completion of Phase 1 (complex commercial, multifamily and industrial permits and applications) which is scheduled for completion in 2023.

## Development Engineering & Environmental Protection

**Tree Management and Protection Bylaw Update:** The City’s Tree Bylaw was adopted in 2013. At that time the bylaw represented a significant step forward in the management and protection of trees within the City. However, through the administration of the bylaw over the past eight years it has become apparent that revisions are required to reflect current industry practices, allow for improved administration of the bylaw and address gaps in the bylaw to ensure the bylaw provides for improved management and protection of trees within the City. A phased approach to this project is proposed with an administrative update as Phase 1 and Phase 2 being a substantial update to ensure alignment with City Plan objectives concurrent with or following the update of the Urban Forest Strategy.

New Assets from Development

	Total Value of New Civil Infrastructure Accepted (in Millions)	New Detached Lots	All Dwelling Units	Total Construction Value (in Millions)
<b>2018</b>	\$16.2	319	947	\$216
<b>2019</b>	\$8.7	147	1,877	\$445
<b>2020</b>	\$12.4	215	1,084	\$243
<b>2021</b>	\$4.5	219	674	\$271
<b>2022</b>	\$5.0	23	1,370	\$410
<b>2023 projection</b>	\$8.2	90	800	\$259

# 2024 KEY INITIATIVES

## Initiatives

### Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan



IAP Priority Action #16 Update the Urban Tree Canopy Management Strategy, conduct a tree canopy assessment and update tree protection bylaws and development guidelines to bring urban tree management into alignment with City Plan objectives. Phased project.



IAP Priority Action #70 Review the Delegation Bylaw to consider increasing the delegation of development permits for affordable housing.



IAP Priority Action #71 Consider new authority in the *Local Government Act* to not require Public Hearings for rezonings.



IAP Priority Action #74 Review Schedule D of the Zoning Bylaw (i.e. Density Bonusing) to further incentivize affordable housing.

IAP Priority Action #195 Update the Zoning Bylaw No. 4500 to be consistent with City Plan. Phased project.

IAP Priority Action #202 Update the Development Permit Area guidelines to be consistent with City Plan policies, with specific focus on: General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines. Phased project.



IAP – C3.2.6 Monitor the Short-Term Rental program.

### Strategic Priority: Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges

Continue to implement the existing BC Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide affordable and supportive housing and proceed with updating the MOU to reflect evolving community needs.

### Strategic Priority: Governance and Corporate Excellence

Review and update the City of Nanaimo Development Cost Charges Bylaw 2017 No. 7252.

# PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	Approved Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget
<b>Revenues</b>						
Development Approvals Admin	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Building Inspections	2,386,000	2,546,500	2,571,965	2,597,685	2,623,661	2,649,898
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	1,231,250	1,228,500	1,240,785	1,253,193	1,265,724	1,278,382
Current Planning	102,100	80,200	81,002	81,811	82,629	83,457
Development Engineering & Environment	45,500	42,500	42,925	43,354	43,788	44,225
Subdivision	60,000	73,000	73,730	74,468	75,213	75,964
<b>Annual Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 3,824,850</b>	<b>\$ 3,970,700</b>	<b>\$ 4,010,407</b>	<b>\$ 4,050,511</b>	<b>\$ 4,091,015</b>	<b>\$ 4,131,926</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>						
Development Approvals Admin	\$ 189,523	\$ 206,654	\$ 212,834	\$ 217,030	\$ 221,341	\$ 224,981
Building Inspections	2,315,195	2,419,181	2,479,164	2,528,271	2,578,856	2,622,118
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	557,539	599,521	617,630	630,072	642,741	653,713
Current Planning	1,019,616	1,073,589	1,105,560	1,127,696	1,150,433	1,169,813
Development Engineering & Environment	965,604	1,057,553	1,088,547	1,110,459	1,139,673	1,152,023
Subdivision	472,569	510,006	525,443	536,030	546,828	555,978
<b>Annual Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 5,520,046</b>	<b>\$ 5,866,504</b>	<b>\$ 6,029,178</b>	<b>\$ 6,149,558</b>	<b>\$ 6,279,872</b>	<b>\$ 6,378,626</b>
<b>Net Annual Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 1,695,196</b>	<b>\$ 1,895,804</b>	<b>\$ 2,018,771</b>	<b>\$ 2,099,047</b>	<b>\$ 2,188,857</b>	<b>\$ 2,246,700</b>
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted	44.0	44.0	44.0	44.0	44.0	44.0



## PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
	Approved Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget	Draft Budget
<b>Expenditure Summary</b>						
Wages & Benefits	\$ 5,114,805	\$ 5,464,379	\$ 5,631,554	\$ 5,743,763	\$ 5,859,026	\$ 5,956,460
Services & Supply Contracts	126,505	131,150	132,140	134,780	144,374	140,223
Materials & Supplies	123,550	112,150	103,505	105,573	107,681	109,839
Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Charges & Other	155,186	158,825	161,979	165,442	168,791	172,104
Debt Servicing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants & Subsidies	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Annual Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 5,520,046</b>	<b>\$ 5,866,504</b>	<b>\$ 6,029,178</b>	<b>\$ 6,149,558</b>	<b>\$ 6,279,872</b>	<b>\$ 6,378,626</b>

2023 wages & benefits reflect 2022 wage rates as contract negotiations were completed after adoption of 2023 - 2027 Financial Plan

### Proposed Changes

Convert a Half-Time Temporary Community Development Clerk to a Permanent Full-Time Community Development Clerk effective January 1, 2024