

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



BUSINESS PLAN 2026

Corporate and Business Development
CORPORATE SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Corporate and Business Development is responsible for managing the City's real estate assets, delivering economic development services and providing oversight of the City's external agencies (Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation & Tourism Nanaimo Society). In addition, the group oversees the contractor for the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. The Department helps deliver strategic projects, such as the Waterfront Walkway and the RCMP Detachment Expansion project. The Department works across the organization and the wider community to facilitate the growth of the City.

The Core Services are:

- Real Estate
- Economic Development
- Oversight of External Agencies (Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and Tourism Nanaimo Society)
- Vancouver Island Conference Centre
- Strategic Projects such as downtown revitalization, the RCMP Detachment Expansion, Waterfront Walkway and redevelopment of 1 Port Drive

Alignment with the Nanaimo Doughnut Economic Framework

The Nanaimo Doughnut is a way of organizing how we plan for Nanaimo's future in a balanced and integrated way. The Corporate and Business Development Department helps ensure we have a strong social foundation through our work in securing properties for affordable housing. We help protect the environment through key parkland acquisitions. We ensure a prosperous future through the work of the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, Tourism Nanaimo Society and our focus on key strategic projects for the City.

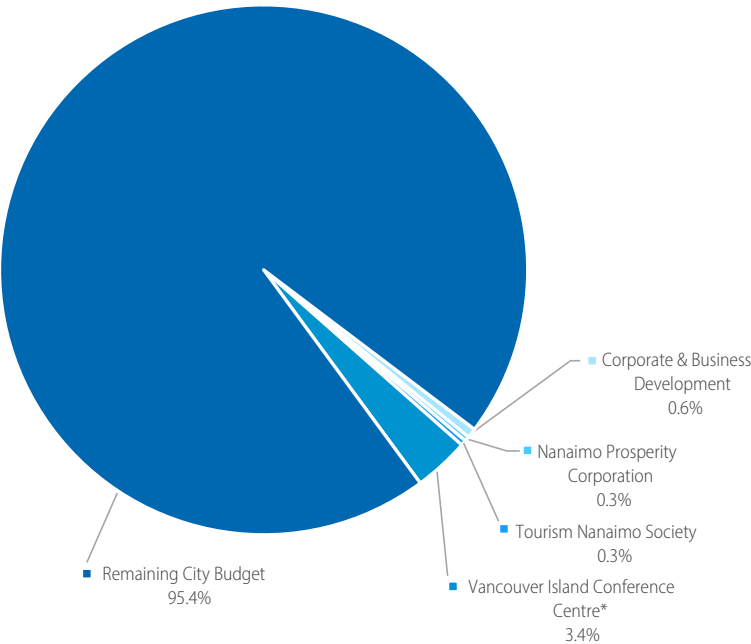
Alignment with City Plan

City Plan guides how we support thoughtful growth, while protecting natural and physical assets and supporting fluid and efficient mobility. It provides strategic directions on land use, Truth and Reconciliation, climate adaptation, health and wellness, diversity, accessibility and inclusion, economic prosperity, sustainable living and much more.

The Corporate and Business Development Department plays a key role in implementing the City Plan by leading specific initiatives while working with staff and community partners to deliver the vision of the Plan.

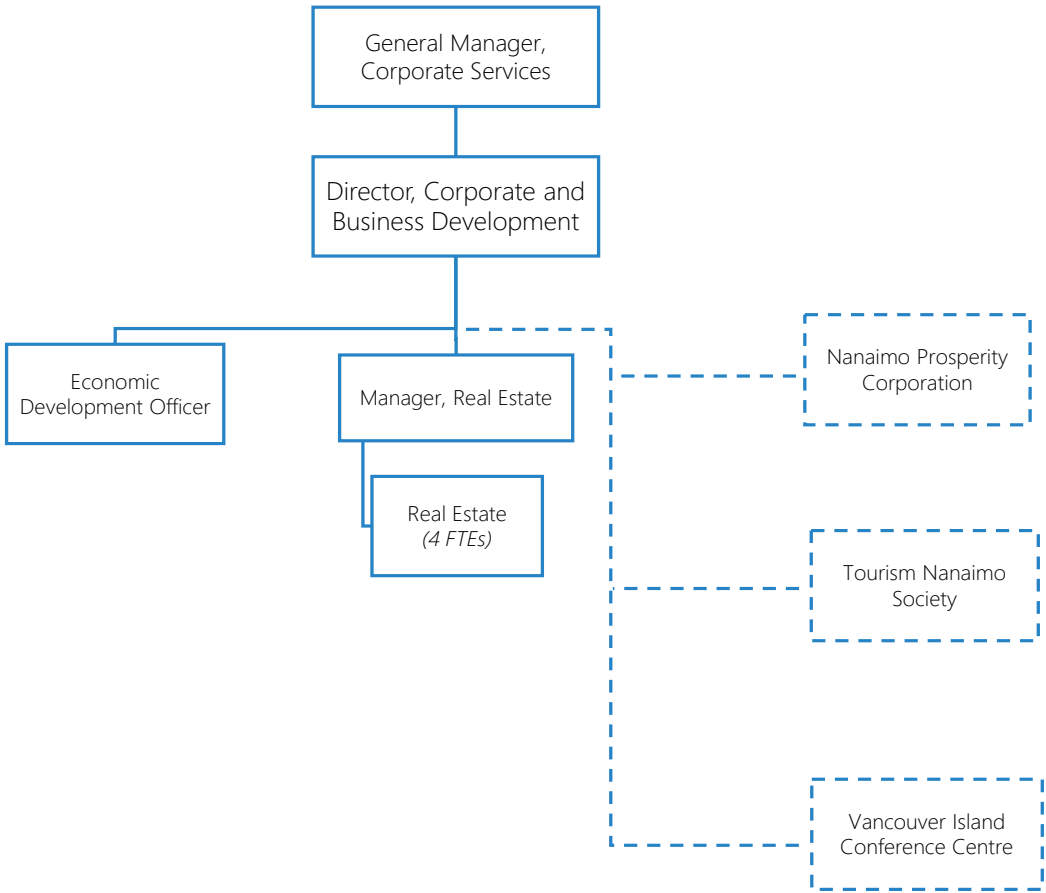
- A Green Nanaimo: We purchase or secure parkland and ecologically sensitive lands for future generations.
- A Healthy Nanaimo: We work with BC Housing to partner on housing projects and work with staff from Parks Recreation and Culture to secure land for new recreational facilities and help administer agreements with user groups.
- A Connected Nanaimo: We work with Engineering and Public Works staff to secure land for new mobility connections. We support public and private sector investments such as the passenger ferry between Vancouver and Nanaimo.
- An Empowered Nanaimo: We support equity and diversity through our support to cultural organizations using City facilities and land and the work of agencies such as Tourism Nanaimo to promote events such as Pride Week.
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: We support the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and Tourism Nanaimo. Our in-house economic development staff provide support to the wider business community. We ensure assets such as the Vancouver Island Conference Centre have maximum impact on our community.

Department's Share of the Budget



Operating Expenditure Budget: \$10,484,153

** includes debt repayment*



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Real Estate

- Administer the City's land assets, including offering strategic advice on asset management and coordinating the sale and disposition of surplus City lands and brownfield redevelopment
- Acquire land for City projects, including land for new roads, parks, housing, recreation facilities and other City buildings
- Provide property management services through preparation of lease, licence and encroachment documents
- Liaise with property owners pre/post-construction for City projects
- Administer City covenants and statutory right-of-way agreements on private property and secure rights-of-way for City utilities
- Acquire property and assist with the obtaining approvals for the Waterfront Walkway – Departure Bay Section
- Assist with the delivery of key downtown initiatives
- Assist where required with the Nanaimo RCMP Detachment expansion

Economic Development

- Deliver timely, relevant, and comprehensive economic and community data to support informed decision-making by businesses and the broader community.
- Offer business development services, including support for business retention and expansion, investment attraction, and promotion of Nanaimo as a leading destination for business and quality of life.
- Strengthen community capacity through strategic partnerships and collaborative initiatives.

Business Development

- Vancouver Island Conference Centre
 - Oversee the contract for the third-party operator who manages this City-owned asset to help drive business and meetings tourism to Nanaimo and increase overnight stays in local hotels and spending in the community
- Corporations/Societies:
 - Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
 - Tourism Nanaimo Society

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Real Estate

Land Acquisitions

In 2025, the City acquired 3.5 acres of land to support a range of City projects including land acquisitions for a future South End Community Centre, expansion to Loudon Park, the remaining lot for the Chinese Memorial Gardens, and acquisitions to enhance the road connectivity within the Mid-Town Gateway Project.

Lease & License Dispositions

In 2025, a number of agreements with user groups were renewed or issued, such as the Co-Management Agreement with the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Curling Club and the Nanaimo & District Track and Field Club and new agreements were issued with Telus Communications Inc. for new cellular telecommunication facilities within City owned-property.

South End Community Centre – Property Acquisitions

Staff successfully negotiated and completed the land assembly required for the future South End Community Centre. As part of this process, staff also contributed to the design of the parking lot at 98 Twelfth Street. Construction and disposition of the property at 98 Twelfth Street are scheduled for 2026.

Loudon Park – Property Acquisitions

Staff negotiated the purchase of 4246 and 4288 Victoria Avenue, two properties adjacent to Loudon Park. In addition to increasing community access to Long Lake, the expanded park land will provide more options to benefit the surrounding neighbourhood and wider community as part of the Loudon Park Improvement Project.

Elaine Hamilton Park – Park Dedication Removal

Staff initiated the bylaw process to remove a portion of the park dedication at Elaine Hamilton Park to accommodate road dedication. With approval from the electors, the road dedication requirements will be fulfilled, allowing the Sandstone Master Plan to move forward.

Support for BC Housing Projects

Staff collaborated closely with BC Housing to advance key initiatives, including receiving Council approval for a lease agreement for a HEARTH housing project at 1030 Old Victoria Road, a 60-year lease at 1435 Cranberry Avenue, and the completion of a land exchange at 250 Terminal Avenue.

Watermain Right-of-Way Acquisition – Regional District of Nanaimo

Staff negotiated and registered seven statutory right-of-way (SRW) agreements with Island Timberlands (Mosaic) for the City's water supply main. This work involved extensive legal and GIS mapping research to identify parcels where SRWs were previously unregistered.

Commercial Street Revitalization

In 2024, the City launched the first of five phases of the Commercial Street Master Plan. The redevelopment focused on improving accessibility, creating flexible public spaces, and enhancing green infrastructure. Following the completion of phase 1, staff finalized new patio encroachment agreements with restaurants and cafés within the revitalized area.

Economic Development

Business Retention and Expansion Program

Ongoing engagement and support to help businesses stay and grow in our community. One-on-one support for local businesses (e.g., navigating permits, zoning, grants), and business site tours.

2025 State of the Economy Report and Custom Data Requests

Collect and analyze data on demographics, labour force trends, and key economic and business indicators. This information supports local planning efforts and helps businesses, developers, and partners make informed decisions.

Circular Economy Accelerator – Phase 2

The Circular Economy Accelerator Program provides hands-on support to businesses who seek to adopt circular economy principles, reduce waste and emissions, increase revenue, and develop innovative practices. Nine diverse Nanaimo businesses have participated in Phase 2 of this program.



Business Development

Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation (NPC)

The City continued to work with the NPC to ensure a thriving and resilient local economy.

Tourism Nanaimo Society

The City, Tourism Nanaimo Society and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association successfully transitioned the administration of the Municipal and Regional District Tax Program (MRDT) over to Tourism Nanaimo effective 2025-JAN-01. In 2025, the focus was on building strong partnerships, enhancing visitor experiences, fostered industry collaboration and strengthening marketing efforts. This work will continue into 2026.

Vancouver Island Conference Centre

Business in the VICC (Vancouver Island Conference Centre) was strong in 2025 as meetings and conventions continue to rebound following pandemic years.

2026 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Real Estate

Increasing land values requires the City to actively manage and leverage existing land assets to generate revenue for future projects. The Property Management Strategy outlines a number of acquisition opportunities which align with City Plan, the Integrated Action Plans and the Strategic Framework.

Port Drive

Further redevelopment of 1 Port Drive is anticipated in 2026 as the City works with partners to develop this high-profile downtown waterfront parcel.

Downtown Nanaimo Revitalization

The City has made major commitments to the downtown core. Staff will work with the Regional District of Nanaimo and BC Transit in 2026 to establish a new downtown transit hub through the demolition of City-owned property and entering into a lease agreement on City-owned property. Staff will also continue to support downtown patios and the summer Thursday Night Market.

Waterfront Walkway

The Waterfront Walkway has remained a key project for the community and is identified in Council's Strategic Framework and has been embedded in the City Plan and Economic Development Strategy. Staff will work on next steps to proceed with acquisitions and obtaining approvals and will take direction from Council as to the timing and priority of the project.

RCMP Detachment Expansion

The City will continue to refine the options available for a long-term plan for future expansion of the RCMP to meet space needs out to 2046.

Economic Development

The City's Economic Development department will continue to work with the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation to deliver economic and business development services in 2026. Staff will seek opportunities for partnerships within the broader business community to implement the Economic Development Strategy.

Friendship City Policy

Research, develop and implement a Friendship City Policy for the City of Nanaimo.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Research and produce "Start Your Business in Nanaimo Guide" which will provide the step-by-step process to starting your business in Nanaimo and relevant resources such as business plans, funding, workshops, exporting, etc.

Provincial Programs and Policy Development

Sector development feedback to provincial government i.e. high-tech sector development, ease of doing business relating to trade and tariffs.

Business Development

Vancouver Island Conference Centre

Staff will continue to work with the third-party operator to help drive meetings and business tourism to Nanaimo and create more economic opportunities for local hoteliers, tourism operators and downtown business operators.

Sponsorship

In 2021 and 2022 the City explored increased revenue generation opportunities through sponsorship of City assets. In 2023, a policy and implementation strategy were endorsed by Council which identified the opportunity to conduct a pilot program at the VICC and the Nanaimo Stadium District. Staff will collaborate to undertake this pilot project.

Tourism Nanaimo

The City will continue to work together with Tourism Nanaimo to achieve the goal of shaping a resilient, inclusive and thriving tourism sector in Nanaimo. Work to achieve these goals are set out in the 2025-2030 Strategic Business Plan and the 5-Year Destination Strategy approved in 2024.

2026 KEY INITIATIVES

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan

IAP Priority Action #43 - Downtown Transit Hub | Construct a downtown transit hub to support active transportation connections between Downtown and surrounding Neighbourhoods and Urban Centres.

IAP Priority Action #64 - Work with BC Housing to identify opportunities for additional shelters and fund additional shelter space.

IAP Priority Action #65 - Construct a new Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment.

IAP Priority Action #75 - Identify sites for acquisition and potential partnerships for affordable and supportive housing projects.

IAP Priority Action #85 - Continue to acquire and manage parks, public lands and water assets that have food production values, such as the Beaufort Park Food Forest.

IAP Priority Action #103 - Work collaboratively with the Economic Development and Tourism teams to develop and execute a coordinated marketing strategy for community wellbeing services in the city. Consider potential alignment / integration with a cultural services marketing strategy.

IAP Priority Action #105 - South End Community Centre | proceed with analysis, site selection, design and development of a South End Community Wellness Facility that integrates recreation, health, culture, and community service components.

IAP Priority Action #110 - Work with the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and the Petroglyph Development Group to create joint economic opportunities.

IAP Priority Action #114 - 100 Comox Road | Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation towards the transfer of 100 Comox Road property adjacent to Maffeo Sutton Park.

IAP Priority Action #116 - Te'tuxwtun – Fifth Street Properties Project | Continue to work in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation, School District 68, and BC Housing to jointly plan and develop the Fifth Street Properties to create an integrated community site providing housing, education, and recreation opportunities as supported by the joint Memorandum of Understanding.

IAP Priority Action #133 – Nanaimo Art Gallery Phased Development Plan | Support the adopted Nanaimo Art Gallery phased development plan at 150n Commercial Street, and assist in the completion of a new feasibility study for the Gallery that explores options of expansion and establishing a “Class A” public art gallery. Refer to the Nanaimo Art Gallery Feasibility Study.

IAP Priority Action #137 - Vancouver Island Conference Centre | Provide new space for arts and culture programming, including using Shaw Auditorium.

IAP Priority Action #162 – Loudon Park Improvements | Implement the Loudon Park Improvement Plan including:

- A community active centre in 2022/2026; and
- Playground and park improvements as per 2021 updated concept plan.

IAP Priority Action #166 - Waterfront Walkway Development | Carry out the Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan Sections 1-6 starting with Section 1.

IAP Priority Action #168 - Diver Lake Loop Trail | Acquire land and build a loop trail around Diver Lake, considering railing design and pullouts that support fishing and multiple uses where possible.

IAP Priority Action #170 - Port Drive Waterfront Park | Implement waterfront improvements described in the Port Drive Waterfront Master Plan including extension of the Waterfront Walkway and creation of new waterfront park.

IAP Priority Action #172 - Complete, adopt, and start implementing the City of Nanaimo Sponsorship Plan by 2023.

IAP Priority Action #174 - Develop an awareness program on the City's Doughnut Economic Framework for City entities: Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, Tourism Nanaimo, and the Systems Planning Organization, and engage with key stakeholders e.g., Port Theatre, Museum, etc.

IAP Priority Action #177 – Advocate for new and expanded health care services and an improved facility at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital that meet the service standards of similar communities in the province.

IAP Priority Action #179 - 1 Port Drive | Continue to work on the phased development of 1 Port Drive by supporting rezoning, subdivision and disposition of the property to create a signature waterfront development. Complete an Investment Package for 1 Port drive.

IAP Priority Action #180 - Stewart Avenue (Newcastle Drive) | Work with the Nanaimo Port Authority in redeveloping the properties along Stewart Avenue (Newcastle Channel) to encourage the development of the Waterfront Walkway and investment in new marina, office, and tourism development.

IAP Priority Action #181 – Re-establish a full Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. Started in partnership with NPC.

IAP Priority Action #188 - Continue to market Nanaimo as a destination for Meetings and Events using a 'Team Nanaimo' approach, following the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, Tourism Nanaimo, and the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

Strategic Priority: Maintaining and Growing Current Services

Supporting the Downtown Transit Hub through lease disposition.

Strategic Priority: Capital Projects

RCMP Expansion

South End Community Centre

1 Port Drive

Downtown Capital Investments

Waterfront Walkway

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Continue to work with the Communications department to ensure the public has access to information regarding key City initiatives.

Strategic Priority: Governance and Corporate Excellence

Provide ongoing support to Tourism Nanaimo, Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and the Downtown Nanaimo Business Association.

PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2025 Approved Budget	2026 Draft Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget	2030 Draft Budget
Revenues						
Corporate & Business Development Administration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Economic Development	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Port of Nanaimo Centre	3,787,990	4,674,034	4,295,247	4,049,857	4,230,987	4,416,080
Real Estate	443,000	534,400	534,524	534,649	534,775	534,902
Tourism	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Revenues	\$ 4,230,990	\$ 5,208,434	\$ 4,829,771	\$ 4,584,506	\$ 4,765,762	\$ 4,950,982
Expenditures						
Corporate & Business Development Administration	\$ 295,240	\$ 291,106	\$ 297,953	\$ 301,977	\$ 305,016	\$ 307,183
Economic Development	189,522	175,275	176,481	177,264	178,862	179,741
Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation	665,000	665,000	665,000	665,000	665,000	665,000
Port of Nanaimo Centre	6,884,801	7,709,107	6,276,984	5,266,126	5,448,536	5,815,560
Real Estate	827,987	891,012	899,438	904,042	912,645	918,998
Tourism	752,653	752,653	752,653	752,653	752,653	752,653
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 9,615,203	\$ 10,484,153	\$ 9,068,509	\$ 8,067,062	\$ 8,262,712	\$ 8,639,135
Net Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 5,384,213	\$ 5,275,719	\$ 4,238,738	\$ 3,482,556	\$ 3,496,950	\$ 3,688,153
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0

The CUPE contract is set to expire on December 31, 2025, a contingency for wage increases has been included in the Financial Plan under Corporate Services.