

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



BUSINESS PLAN 2026

Legislative Services, Communications and
the Mayor's Office
ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Legislative Services, Communications and the Mayor's Office provide legislative, policy and administrative expertise and services to Council, City departments and the public.

Legislative Services ensures the City conducts its business in compliance with provincial legislation and City bylaws. The department is responsible for running civic elections, alternative approval processes and referendums, and oversees the administration of Council and Committee meetings. In addition, it is responsible for records management services and public records access requests under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

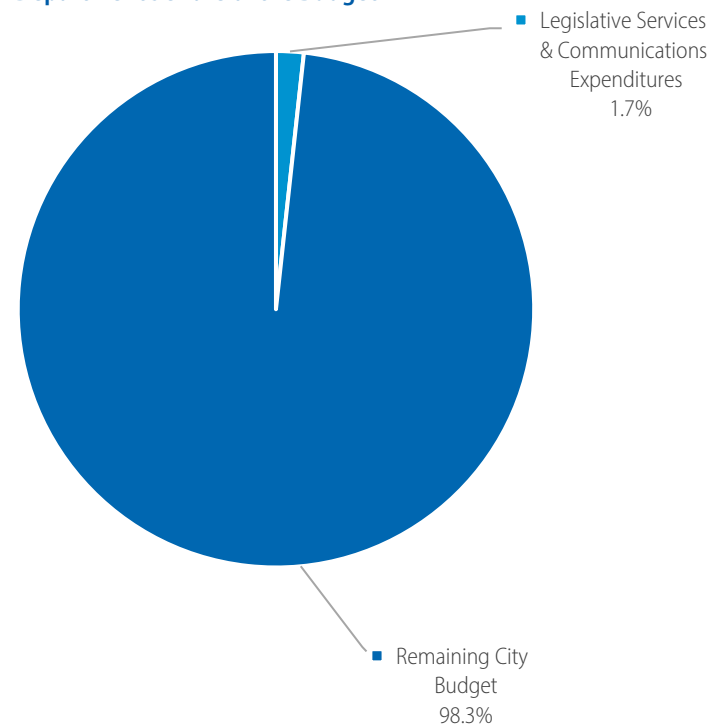
The Communications department supports Council-approved initiatives and ongoing City operations and programs. The department issues news releases, manages the City's social media channels, supports public engagement activities and shares announcements with the public through digital, print and paid media channels.

The Mayor's Office provides services to City Council and the public and oversees planning and organization of special initiatives such as Bastion lighting requests, birthday or anniversary greetings from the Mayor, Patron of the City and Freedom of the City ceremonies, flag raising ceremonies and inaugural Council meetings.

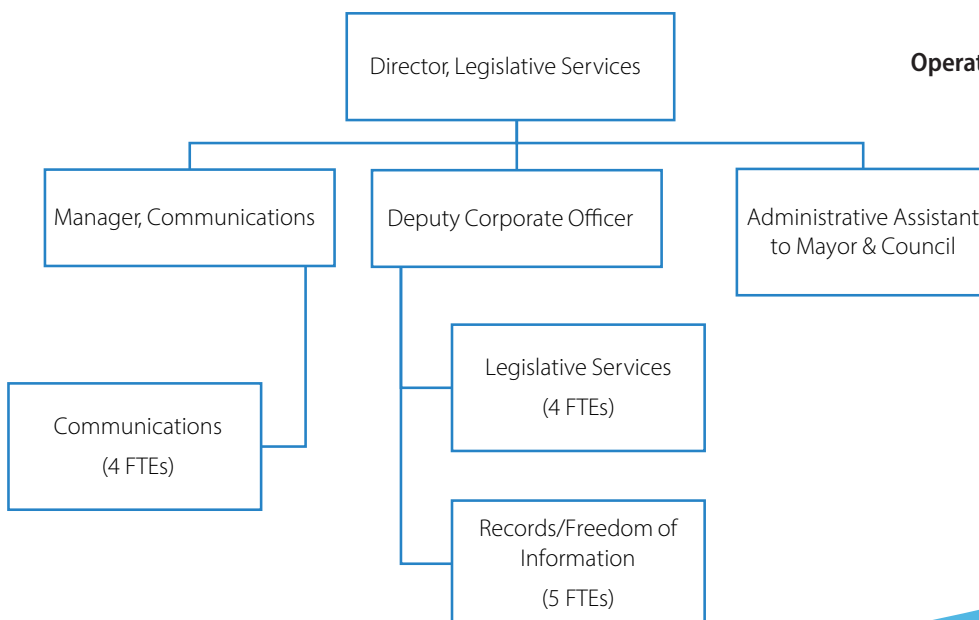
The core services are:

- Legislative services
- Communication services
- City Council and public support

Department's Share of the Budget



Operating Expenditure Budget: \$3,934,934



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Legislative Services

The Director of Legislative Services is responsible for ensuring that Council conducts its meetings in compliance with all statutory requirements, and the decisions made at Council meetings take into account all statutory prerequisites.

The Legislative Services department conducts local government elections, by-elections, alternative approval processes and referendums; acts as the official signatory for the City; conducts research for other City departments and Council; and maintains a registry of all bylaws and Council policies.

Additional responsibilities of the Legislative Services department include the following:

Legislative Support

The Legislative Support section oversees meeting logistics and documentation for all Council, Committee and Public Hearing meetings. The section coordinates meetings, prepares and distributes agendas, minutes and other meeting materials and tracks outstanding tasks resulting from Council and Committee resolutions, advertises and coordinates appointments to Council-appointed committees and provides other departments and the public with information regarding Council decisions and procedures. The Legislative Support team provides a primary communications link between City Council, staff and the community.

Records/Information and Privacy Support

The Records/Information and Privacy Support section coordinates and maintains the City's corporate Records Management Program and systems; retains all legal documents (e.g. contracts, agreements, leases, etc.); and accepts liability claims against the City of Nanaimo, maintaining claim files in coordination with the City's liability insurer, the Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia.

The section is responsible for implementation and oversight of the City's Privacy Management Program, which includes ensuring compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, providing mandatory training to all staff on privacy matters, ensuring privacy impact assessments are completed for all new or updated City initiatives and reviewing and improving policies related to records management and privacy protection.

Communications

The Communications department promotes and supports Council-approved initiatives and ongoing City projects with internal, public and partner-focused information, engagement and outreach activities. This includes providing strategic advice and communications planning, reputational risk assessment and management and editorial and creative services. Communications provides information to the public through news releases, news conferences, virtual town halls, the City's public engagement platform, website and active social media channels.

Communications collaborate with all City departments to support public events and initiatives including event planning, marketing, campaign development and creative services including photography, graphic design, social media outreach, podcast and video production.

Staff provide proactive communication support on emerging issues, collaborate with City agencies and partners on key initiatives and prepare members of Council and subject matter experts for media interviews.

Mayor's Office

The Mayor's Office provides information, guidance and direction to the public and others concerning a wide variety of civic matters and procedures and coordinates the distribution and response to all correspondence and invitations received by the City Council. The Office provides daily support to the Mayor including preparing materials and information for media inquiries and meetings with the public and other stakeholders.

The Office prepares and distributes correspondence and documentation of a highly confidential nature and follows up on pending matters. Additional responsibilities include arranging meetings with higher levels of government, organizing travel, accommodations and other arrangements for the Mayor and Councillors when attending out-of-town meetings and conference (e.g. UBCM, AVICC, FCM and VIEA), and coordinating special projects (e.g. hosting bi-yearly the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities conference).

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Legislative Support

- Continued support for Council, committee meetings and Public Hearings
- Supported the Parks, Recreation and Culture department in establishing the new Nanaimo Performing Arts Guild
- Meetings as of August 1, 2025: 19 Council/Public Hearings, 13 In Camera Council meetings, 22 Committee meetings
- Conducted an Alternative Approval Process for partial park dedication removal from a portion of Elaine Hamilton Park
- Bylaw/Policy Renewal Project - updated/amended the following:
 - Council Procedure Bylaw
 - Miscellaneous Bylaws Repeal Bylaw
 - Respectful Spaces Bylaw
 - Political Signage Regulation Amendment Bylaw
 - Media Accreditation Policy
- Assisted various departments with the following bylaws and policies:
 - Bylaw Notice Enforcement Amendment Bylaws
 - Home Energy Retrofit Financing Program Local Area Service Bylaws
 - False Alarm Bylaw
 - Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw
 - Fire Protection and Life Safety Regulation Amendment Bylaw
 - Management Terms and Conditions Bylaw
 - Officer Designation and Delegation of Authority Amendment Bylaws
 - Civic Sport Merit Awards and Arts/Culture Merit Award Policy and several administrative policies
- Created the Government Services Guide, Guidelines for Informal Public Engagement Opportunities and updated the Guidelines for Minute Taking
- Created and updated operational procedures to support orderly conduct of Council and Committee meetings, agenda access and preparation process, and processing and tracking of incoming inquiries



- Initiated updates to Council and Committee reports templates and the Report Writers' Guide
- Commenced the legal services contract review on behalf of the City departments

Records, Information and Privacy Support

- Completed first ever official disposition/destruction process in the City's Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS)
- In coordination with the IT Department, staff developed procedures to securely destroy obsolete databases. This is a requirement of Cyber Security Insurance
- Completed two off-site, physical records destruction sub-projects in coordination with the Public Works and Parks, Recreation and Culture departments

- Updated the Terms of Reference for the Data Privacy and Security Committee previously named Privacy/Information Security Committee). Updates included membership, meeting frequency, defined quorum, and clarified responsibilities
- Updated the City's agreement with the Nanaimo Community Archives, including ongoing development of procedures related to transfer of records to the Archives
- Collaborated with IT in the development of Acceptable Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and AI Best Practices Guidelines
- Continued improvements and updates to the Video Surveillance of Civic Property Policy to reflect current practices and organizational charts
- Statistics (as of August 1, 2025):
 - 289 boxes of physical records securely destroyed
 - Two obsolete databases approved for destruction following newly developed procedure
 - 79,903 records securely destroyed in the EDRMS (December 2024)
 - 46 active users in Laserfiche
 - 215 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received
 - 39 active claims, with 30 claims opened and 28 closed in 2025
 - Two Data Privacy and Security Committee meetings held
 - 25 Privacy Impact Assessments opened and 25 completed in 2025

Communications

- Provided strategic advice to senior management and Council on emerging matters, policy initiatives, projects and programming
- Supported the City's government relations and advocacy activities
- Collaborated with various departments on their public engagement needs
- Filmed and produced videos to inform, educate, increase awareness, market services and make announcements
- Received the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting for the 2023 Annual Report and the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for the 2023 Popular Annual Financial Report, produced by the Communications and Finance departments



- Supported and enhanced Council-related information with the public by producing Council and Committee meeting summaries, a weekly e-newsletter (My Nanaimo This Week) and other media
- Continued communications and engagement support for all City departments, such as:
 - Commercial Street upgrades and opening
 - Community centre for South Nanaimo
 - Midtown Gateway and water projects
 - Nanaimo Bar record breaking event
 - Public Works Day
 - Westwood Lake updates
 - Woodgrove area plan
- Implemented and added Bluesky as a new official social media platform
- Implemented WAZE traffic alerts for City road disruption projects
- 5.7 million views on City's Facebook content
- Updated City of Nanaimo Writing Style Guide to include accessible and inclusive language.
- Statistics (as of July 25, 2025):
 - Facebook Followers: 20,709
 - Instagram Followers: 7,106
 - LinkedIn Followers: 6,000+
 - News Releases and Statements: 57
 - My Nanaimo This Week Newsletter: 32

Mayor's Office

- Processed 39 proclamations in 2024 and 31 as of July 2025
- Programmed 88 Bastion lighting requests in 2024 and 78 as of July 2025
- Successfully hosted, in partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo the conference for the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities for 55 communities and 375 elected officials
- Coordinated the Freedom of the City Ceremony for recipient John Ruttan
- Coordinated the Patron of the City Ceremony for recipient Shirley Lance
- Ordered and distributed the 150 incorporation commemorative pins
- Edited and updated the official City pins design for better compliance to original design
- Ensured compliance to Council's conference budget limits
- Coordinated 14 flag raising ceremonies at City Hall for various groups

2026 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Legislative Services

- Council, committee meetings and Public Hearings support
- Ongoing eScribe improvements to increase efficiency with an anticipated migration to eScribe version six in 2026 - 2027
- Planning, coordinating and administering the 2026 Municipal General Election to be held on October 17, 2026
- If Council direction is received, coordinate and host a referendum or alternative approval process for future large capital projects
- Continue to modernize bylaws to ensure they align with Council's stated strategic goals, priorities, and policy objectives
- Ongoing implementation of mandatory virtual records, information and privacy training for all City Staff, and development of further training to complement the Records Management project and associated policies
- Ongoing completion of Privacy Impact Assessments for all new projects and initiatives.
- Ongoing review and inventory of the City's Information Sharing Agreements
- Ongoing implementation of auditing procedures that support the Records Management and Privacy Management Programs
- Continue to develop training and refine policy and guidelines for staff around the appropriate use of emerging AI technologies

Communications

- Improve accessibility for all website users by adopting plain language standards, using graphics to clarify and communicate non-verbally, ensuring alt-text is used for images and implementing other best practices
- Provide strategic advice and practical support to Council on emerging matters, policy initiatives, advocacy activities, campaigns and intergovernmental relations
- Maintain positive relationships with the media and seek opportunities to promote Nanaimo's strengths in local and external markets
- Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop content for the City website relating to the Nation and land acknowledgement
- Collaborate with and support departments to meet their analog and digital public engagement needs
- Continue bi-weekly podcast episodes focusing on important topics or highlighting the people that work in the City of Nanaimo
- Continue to participate in Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) training to stay updated on protocols and procedures
- Review and update the City's Corporate Communications Plan and Crisis Communications Plan to reflect existing and emerging communication trends

Mayor's Office

- Support Council and the public by responding to incoming inquiries, preparing and providing information materials, and managing conference attendance details
- Continue to process requests for proclamations, Bastion lighting requests and flag raising requests
- Process applications for the Freedom of the City and the Patron of the City honours and organize ceremonies as required
- Continue to provide incorporation commemorative pins
- Organize the inaugural Council meeting following the 2026 Municipal General Election

2026 KEY INITIATIVES - LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan

IAP Priority Action 118 – Continue to support the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness as required by the Accessibility BC Act.

IAP Priority Action 120 – Continue to explore and implement existing and emerging technologies to improve access to City services online, via phone, and in person for citizens with audio-visual accessibility needs.

Strategic Priority: Capital Projects

Support capital projects that require elector approval through either alternative approval process or referendum.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Continue to explore and implement innovative tools to increase accessibility and clarity for meetings and meeting materials.

Strategic Priority: Governance and Corporate Excellence

Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Provincial Government and the Regional District of Nanaimo to enable Snuneymuxw First Nation members living on reserve to participate in City elections.

Planning, coordinating and administering the October 17, 2026 Municipal General Election.

Ongoing implementation and maintenance of the City's Privacy Management Program and Records Management Program.

Ongoing maintenance of the City's Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS).

Ongoing implementation of mandatory virtual records, information and privacy training for all City Staff, and development of further training to complement the RM project and associated policies.

Continue to develop training and refine policy and guidelines for staff around the appropriate use of emerging AI technologies.

2026 KEY INITIATIVES - COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan

IAP Priority Action 187 – Create a coordinating visual brand and general narrative for Nanaimo in partnership with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Explore and implement emerging or innovative communications tools that will increase audience reach.

Coordinate with the IT department on a website refresh, updating the current software to meet cybersecurity requirements and identifying and implementing improvements to navigation and user experience.

Improve accessibility for all website users by adopting plain language standards, using graphics to clarify and communicate non-verbally, ensuring alt-text is used for images and implementing other best practices. Develop staff training to support these efforts.

Continue to use social media, online platforms and other tools such as the Emergency Call Alert System – called Voyent Alert! to share seasonal hazard information related to fire, heat waves, flooding, wind, storm or other seasonal events.

Enhance current public engagement processes and utilize standardized practices developed by the International Association of Public Participation.

PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2025 Approved Budget	2026 Draft Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget	2030 Draft Budget
Revenues						
Communications	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Legislative Services	24,000	125,651	19,800	-	20,600	135,881
Annual Operating Revenues	\$ 24,000	\$ 125,651	\$ 19,800	\$ -	\$ 20,600	\$ 135,881
Expenditures						
Communications	\$ 683,337	\$ 676,091	\$ 678,298	\$ 678,408	\$ 682,982	\$ 685,239
Legislative Services	3,294,369	3,258,843	2,868,827	2,847,917	2,905,614	3,339,608
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 3,977,706	\$ 3,934,934	\$ 3,547,125	\$ 3,526,325	\$ 3,588,596	\$ 4,024,847
Net Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 3,953,706	\$ 3,809,283	\$ 3,527,325	\$ 3,526,325	\$ 3,567,996	\$ 3,888,966
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.0

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.