



BUSINESS PLAN 2026

Planning and Development

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Planning and Development department is responsible for community planning, development application approvals, building permitting, subdivision, sustainability planning, business licensing, as well as approval of development related engineering works and tree removal permits.

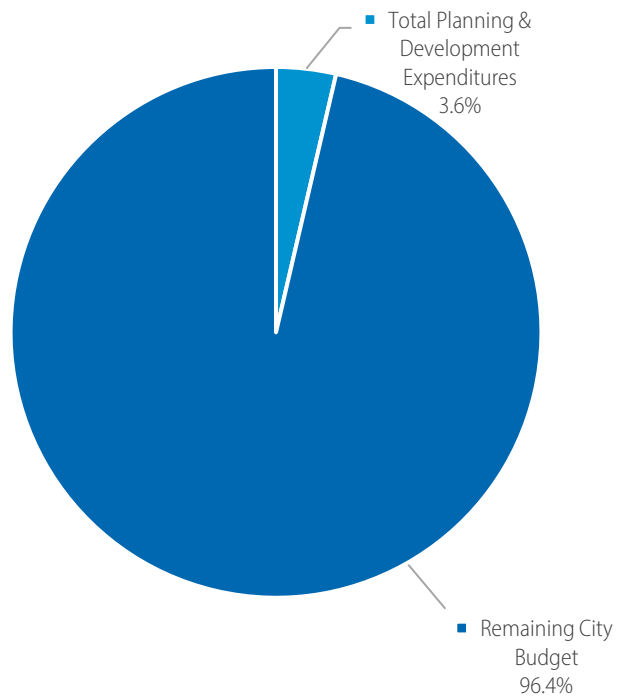
The department works with a wide range of external groups and City departments to develop and implement plans, programs, and projects to guide and manage the City's land use in a sustainable and integrated way, while also enhancing community, safety, pride, wellbeing, livability, and equity.

This team interacts with many community and development industry stakeholders and City departments to build a well-designed, healthy and prosperous community.

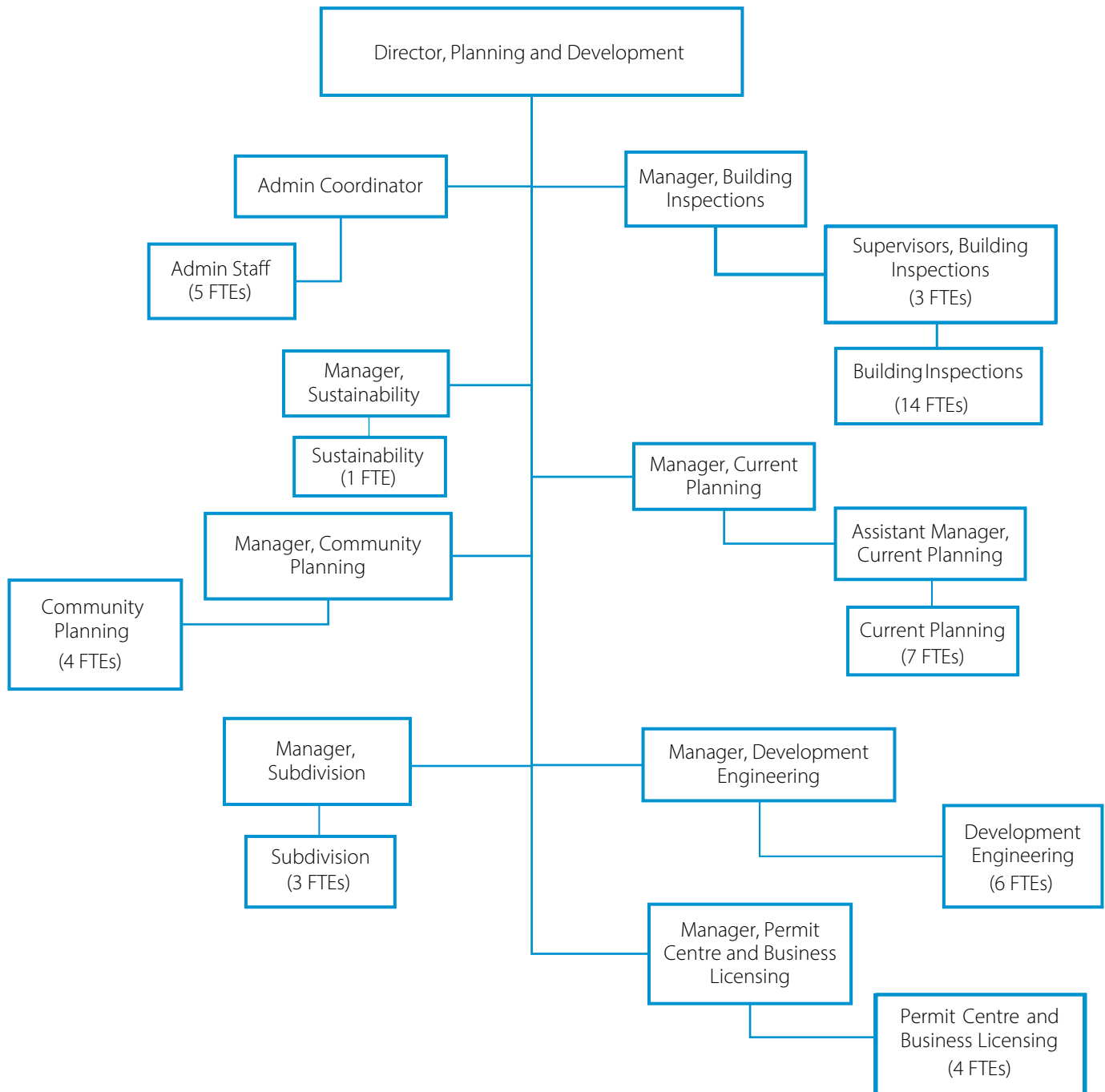
The Core Services are:

- Building Inspections
- Business Licensing & Permit Centre
- Community Planning
- Current Planning
- Development Engineering
- Subdivision
- Sustainability

Department's Share of the Budget



Operating Expenditure Budget: \$8,276,423



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Building Inspections

- Administer Building Regulations within Nanaimo through the Building Bylaw, the BC Building Code, and other regulations.
- Process applications for building permits.
- Perform building permit-related inspections.
- Conduct complaint-driven building violation inspections.
- Enforcement of the Building Bylaw.
- Conduct over 13,000 inspections each year.

Business Licensing & Permit Centre

- Responsible for the administration of 7,100 business licences, including, home-based, commercial, non-profit, non-resident, food vending and short-term rental. In addition to the licences issued for businesses that operate locally, 1,028 licences were issued under the Inter-Community Business Licence Bylaw which allows mobile businesses, such as trades, the ability to operate in participating municipalities without the need to obtain separate business licences in each municipality.
- Works regularly and collaboratively with community partners (VIHA, Community Care, RCMP, etc.) and internal departments (Current Planning, Fire Rescue, Recreation and Culture, Parks) to ensure that businesses are compliant with municipal and provincial regulations.
- The Permit Centre provides frontline support and offers walk-in customers a one-stop-shop experience with staff representatives from Building Inspections, Current Planning, and Engineering sections. Enquiries related to other departmental sections not represented in the Permit Centre are fulfilled on an as-needed basis by staff from the other sections.
- Permit Centre clerks provide assistance and support to the Building Inspections section by processing applications received for residential building permits through the online portal and to customers by trouble-shooting online permitting software issues and accepting payments for permit fees.



Community Planning

- Support implementation of the City's vision for future land use management, as outlined in City Plan, which serves as the City's Official Community Plan (OCP).
- Lead the creation of Area Plans to support the development of complete, connected, and sustainable Urban Centres as outlined in City Plan.
- Work with the Regional District of Nanaimo and member municipalities to support Regional Growth Management.
- Support engagement with neighbourhood associations as per Council policy.
- Anticipate and respond to growth management, including addressing strategic priorities regarding land use planning, affordable housing, heritage, and archaeological assessments.
- Provide professional advice, guidance, and support on community and long range planning matters to internal departments, community, business sector, and other interested organizations.

Current Planning

- Respond to public inquiries and planning information requests.
- Provide professional advice and guidance to applicants and property owners in the development approval process.
- Implement City Plan policies and ensure new development adheres to applicable Development Permit Area Guidelines.
- Administer development related bylaws including the Zoning Bylaw, Parking Bylaw and Sign Bylaw.
- Review development-related applications including Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments, rezonings, covenant amendments, development permits, development variance permits, temporary use permits and sign permits.
- Bring forward appeals to the Board of Variance.
- Review applications from external agencies related to liquor and cannabis licences, telecommunications facilities and development within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- Review business license applications for compliance with the Zoning Bylaw and applicable land use regulations.
- Committees: Design Advisory Panel, Board of Variance.

Development Engineering

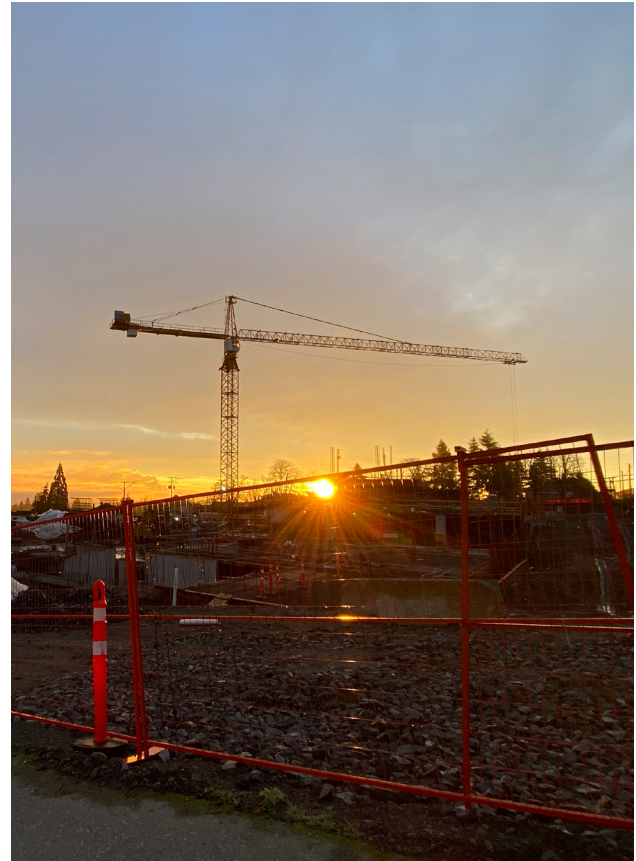
- Review and coordinate development-driven engineering works.
- Process works-in-city-streets permits, fill permits.
- Issue tree removal permits and review development applications for tree retention recommendations.
- Maintain statistics for the value of civil works constructed through development.

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.

Sustainability

- Oversee community-wide energy management, climate action (mitigation) and adaptation (resiliency) and other environmental programs through the development and implementation of plans, programs, and other actions.



- Develop and administer climate action and environmental grants and rebate programs.
- Build and support community-wide education, awareness, and actions to address climate action and adaptation.
- Report regularly on corporate and community sustainability actions and progress.
- Lead the initial development of a monitoring strategy to track progress towards City Plan goals based on Nanaimo's Doughnut Economics sustainability framework.
- Develop and implement plans to increase awareness of, and participation in, various energy conservation and demand side management programs, focusing on residential and commercial sectors.
- Provide professional advice, guidance, and direction on sustainability and environmental issues to internal departments, community, business sector, and other interested organizations.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

Community Planning

- In cooperation with the Current Planning team, completed new Form and Character Design Guidelines for Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8), to guide the development of multi-family, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development.
- Completed the housing data collection required for the interim and year one Housing Target Progress Reports in accordance with the Provincial Ministerial Order to the City of Nanaimo.
- Continued to work towards the creation of a new Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) Bylaw, along with the Development Cost Charge (DCC) update project.
- In cooperation with the Current Planning team, commenced a financial feasibility analysis (with Provincial Capacity Funds) to assess the potential for planning tools such as Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonusing to encourage more affordable housing, and for Tenant Protections to protect tenants facing displacement from new development.
- Completed several phases of the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre Complete Community Assessment (with Provincial Complete Communities funding).
- Completed a review of City Plan (as required by the Local Government Act), and confirmed that: i) City Plan contains the required policy guidance to support the seven categories of housing need; and ii) City Plan future land use designations and the Zoning Bylaw can accommodate much more than 20 years of anticipated housing need.
- Supported the Parks, Recreation and Culture department with various initiatives, including completing the Park Avenue Park Concept Plan.
- Completed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to support the enforcement of short term rental units with the goal to maintain and increase the long-term rental housing stock.
- Reported to neighbourhood associations on the progress of their 2024 priority requests, and facilitated the third annual Neighbourhood Association Engagement Event and issued the neighbourhood association grants.
- Continued implementation of the Heritage Program by facilitating the issuance of Heritage Façade grants, Heritage Home grants, and Heritage Alteration Permits.



- Completed consultation to create a policy to support residents in manufactured home parks from facing displacement due to development.

Current Planning

- Updated the Delegation of Authority Bylaw as part of a broader development approval process review to reduce approval timelines and facilitate efficient application reviews.
- Continued to review the Zoning Bylaw and secured consultants to support architectural testing and market financial analysis which will inform amendments to the zoning regulations and ensure the bylaw aligns with City Plan policies and supports other Council priorities such as affordable housing.
- Completed public engagement for the Parking Bylaw review and drafted potential amendments to the bylaw.
- Adopted amendments to the Parking Bylaw to remove minimum parking requirements in the Downtown Urban Centre in support of walkable, transit-oriented development.
- Worked with external agencies such as BC Housing to advance strategic development applications throughout the city, including several supportive and affordable housing developments.

Sustainability

- Launched a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) style Home Energy Retrofit Financing Pilot Program and received 37 applications.
- Submitted a funding application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to expand the Home Energy Retrofit Financing Program with a third-party financing option.
- Proposed a City Plan Monitoring Strategy Engagement Process.
- Completed Phase 1 of a Manufactured Home Park Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction Strategy with the Regional District of Nanaimo and initiated Phase 2 of the project with funding support from BC Hydro.
- Received confirmation our funding application to the provincial Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding Program for City of Nanaimo's Sea Level Rise Management Plan for up to \$400,000 has been approved and initiated the project.
- Completed outreach and promotional campaigns to invite property owners to participate in Landlord BC's Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator and Building Benchmark BC programs that support existing large residential and commercial building retrofits for free.
- Completed a review of the Demolition and Deconstruction Bylaw best practices and engaged with industry representatives and other stakeholders to explore options to manage demolition and deconstruction waste.
- Started a joint project with the Regional District of Nanaimo on delivering builders training sessions to help them meet the upper steps of the BC Energy Step Code with funding support from BC Hydro.
- Continued to provide rebates for Home Energy Assessment, EV Charging Infrastructure and Woodstove Exchange Programs and funding to support Home Energy Navigator Program for Nanaimo residents
- Supported seven community-led initiatives through Community Environmental Sustainability Project Grant.
- Sponsored Cool It! Climate Leadership Training Program to work with 5 elementary classes and 5 high school classes during the spring semester, reaching 251 students and completing 1,222 actions.

Development Activity

Development activity in Nanaimo in 2025 remains strong despite ongoing economic challenges of inflation, higher interest rates, and impacts of international tariffs, particularly on construction materials. Significant development applications under review in 2025 include supportive housing sites, Te'tuxwtun, Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, Bowers District and subdivisions within Sandstone.

Building permits have been issued for \$187M in total construction value achieved by the end of August 2025. This includes building permits for 547 new residential units, with 800 units projected by the end of 2025

Business Licensing and Permit Centre

Short-term rentals

- Amendments to the Zoning, Business Licence and Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaws were adopted in 2025 which provided additional clarity to existing short-term rental regulations as well as increased enforcement tools and fines for non-compliance.
- Provincial regulations continue to evolve with the introduction of the short-term rental registration process which ensures that the primary residence requirement is adhered to.
- Now that the municipal and the phased provincial regulations are fully implemented, staff continues to actively work with and collaborate with the province on the regulatory and enforcement aspects of short-term rental operations.

Mobile Food Vending Review

- In 2024, Business Licensing and Parks, Recreation and Culture engaged a consultant to review the current mobile food vending program which was established in 2016. The review concluded in December 2024 and provided suggestions and strategies on how to improve upon the administration of the existing program as well as options for increasing the number of food vending locations within city parks and streets.
- To date, staff has introduced four additional parking spaces in Maffeo Sutton Park and an online booking calendar has been established and will provide food vendors the ability to select and book designated parking spots.
- Staff will continue to support the growth of the program and will incorporate recommendations from the review as time and budget permits.

Building Inspections

Certified Professional Program

The Program, introduced in 2024 is gaining notable traction as an efficient alternative to the traditional building permitting process. One of the key advantages of the Certified Professional (CP) Program is its support for phased development, which enables projects to proceed in clearly defined stages. This flexibility allows developers to begin construction on portions of a project; such as foundations, while other aspects, like mechanical systems, fire suppression systems and architectural details are still under design and not yet ready for review. By facilitating staged permitting, the CP Program helps reduce delays and optimize construction timelines, especially for large or complex builds. This approach is particularly beneficial in projects with tight schedules or evolving design elements, as it allows work to progress while the detailed information required for full approval of the project is finalized.

eApply

The City of Nanaimo has implemented eApply, a new online system designed to streamline the permit application process. As part of this rollout, demolition permits and accessory building permits are now available for submission through the platform, with additional permit types to be added in the coming months. The system features tailored application forms that guide applicants through the required documentation and information, helping to reduce the number of incomplete or delayed submissions. By improving clarity and accessibility, eApply supports more efficient processing and enhances the overall customer experience for builders, homeowners, and developers alike.

Subdivision

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. The planned update to the Bylaw is being coordinated with an update to the Manual of Engineering Standards and Specifications (MoESS), which makes up Schedule A of the Bylaw, with the intent of bringing both amendments forward concurrently.

Development Engineering

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 tree voucher program has been increasingly popular since its inception in 2017. The number of tree vouchers applied for in 2025 has exceeded other years with 1,550 tree vouchers applied for by August 31, 2025.

New Assets from Development	
Year	Total Value of New Civil Infrastructure Accepted (in Millions)
2020	\$12.4
2021	\$4.5
2022	\$5.0
2023	\$9.4
2024	
2025 projection	

New Detached Lots	
Year	Number of New Lots
2020	215
2021	219
2022	23
2023	88
2024	42
2025 projection	50

All Dwelling Units	
Year	Dwelling Units
2020	1,084
2021	674
2022	1,370
2023	1,170
2024	431
2025 projection	800

Total Construction Value	
Year	Value (in Millions)
2020	\$243
2021	\$271
2022	\$410
2023	\$365
2024	\$203
2025 projection	\$260

2026 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Community Planning

- Integrated Action Plan: Commence a review of the Integrated Action Plan, and facilitate the selection of new priority actions to be recommended to Council.
- Woodgrove Area Plan: With the results of the Complete Community Assessment, finalize the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre Area Plan.
- Tenant Protections: Finalize policies to support tenants facing displacement due to potential redevelopment of rental apartment buildings.
- Support to the Zoning Bylaw update project: Community Planning will provide support to Current Planning with various aspects of the Zoning Bylaw update project to encourage the development of below market housing, and to address other housing needs categories.

Sustainability

- City Plan Monitoring and Engagement: Continue to work on the development of remaining indicators and data collection with stakeholders and subject matter experts and support public communication and community engagement efforts.
- Home Retrofit Financing Program: Once program funding is secured, launch the Home Retrofit Financing Program to support homeowners who undertake measures to reduce emissions, incorporate cooling, mitigate the impact of power outage and improve occupants' health.
- Sea Level Rise Management Plan: Initiate a project to develop a sea level rise management plan.

Current Planning

- Complete a comprehensive review and update to the Zoning Bylaw with amendments to support Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonus for Affordable Housing.
- Complete a comprehensive review and update to the Parking Bylaw to align with and support City Plan policies and objectives

Planning Function Review Implementation

- Implementing the recommendations of the Planning Function Review, which was completed in 2024, will be a key focus for Planning and Development going forward.

Staffing

Several factors, including a new BC Building Code and Provincial legislative changes along with changing market conditions combined to create additional challenges in 2024 and into 2025. The City of Nanaimo is currently experiencing a multi-year development boom, with 2025 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 is essential moving forward.

Permitting and Approval System Improvements

Implementation of a new online application portal that integrates with existing software and property records, while providing the customer with a modern interface and the ability to monitor application status through a personalized account as well as through a dashboard. Planning and Development department, working with the Information Technology department and consultants are in the process of implementing the software through a phased approach that will continue through 2026.

Development Engineering

Management and Protection of Trees 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.

2026 KEY INITIATIVES

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan

IAP Priority Action #7 – Develop a program to encourage the adoption of e-bikes with equity considerations

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.

IAP Priority Action #22 – Continue the City's Water Saving Rebate Programs to reduce water consumption.

IAP Priority Action #69 – Complete an analysis of Urban Centre and Corridor land use designations with the objective of pre-zoning appropriate parcels for affordable housing.

IAP Priority Action #73 – Create a tenant relocation policy to support tenants impacted by redevelopment and displacement.

IAP Priority Action #196 – Prepare an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre that provides detailed land use, policy guidance, infrastructure planning, and amenity needs.

IAP Priority Action #198 – Implement the Neighbourhood Associations Supports Policy.

IAP – C3.2.2 – Annually report to Council on the affordable housing progress action items and targets.

IAP – C3.2.8 – 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.

IAP – C4.6.2 – Maintain the Heritage Conservation Program, which includes maintaining a Heritage Register, and considering archaeology and heritage in the development approval process.

IAP – C4.6.3 – Continue to offer the Heritage Building Tax Exemption Grant, the Heritage Façade Grant, and the Heritage Home Grant.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Holding annual engagements to define the collective priorities of the neighbourhood associations and confirming with the associations their 2025 priority requests.

Complete engagement with the community on planning initiatives such as the Woodgrove Area Plan, Zoning Bylaw Update, Off-Street Parking Bylaw Update, Tenant Protections, and the Monitoring Strategy.

Governance and Corporate Excellence

City Plan and the Zoning Bylaw Update to take place in 2025 and into 2026. This process will include public consultation and alignment with provincial legislative requirements.

Implementation of the goals identified in the Planning Function Review.

Further implementation of the e-Apply software – permitting and development approval system improvements.

PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2025 Approved Budget	2026 Draft Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget	2030 Draft Budget
Revenues						
Planning & Development Administration	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,020	\$ 2,040	\$ 2,060	\$ 2,081
Building Inspections	2,350,500	2,300,500	2,323,505	2,346,740	2,370,207	2,393,909
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	1,305,000	1,375,000	1,388,750	1,402,637	1,416,663	1,430,830
Community Planning	1,500	-	-	-	-	-
Current Planning	66,000	77,500	78,275	79,058	79,849	80,648
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	20,500	20,000	20,200	20,402	20,606	20,812
Subdivision	52,000	58,000	58,580	59,166	59,758	60,356
Sustainability	50,000	-	-	-	-	-
System Planning Organization	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Revenues	\$ 3,845,500	\$ 3,833,000	\$ 3,871,330	\$ 3,910,043	\$ 3,949,143	\$ 3,988,636
Expenditures						
Planning & Development Administration	\$ 941,801	\$ 938,367	\$ 941,975	\$ 942,473	\$ 948,934	\$ 952,523
Building Inspections	2,486,858	2,504,273	2,513,884	2,521,569	2,529,684	2,535,009
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	601,662	610,081	611,980	611,886	615,771	617,640
Community Planning	756,666	765,620	768,296	768,429	772,850	774,817
Current Planning	1,227,654	1,265,207	1,273,209	1,275,273	1,282,816	1,286,037
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	908,729	896,980	890,410	890,716	895,767	897,822
Subdivision	533,603	529,509	534,648	530,254	537,830	534,792
Sustainability	508,759	286,386	337,802	338,040	340,402	341,519
System Planning Organization	951,737	480,000	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 8,917,469	\$ 8,276,423	\$ 7,872,204	\$ 7,878,640	\$ 7,924,054	\$ 7,940,159
Net Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 5,071,969	\$ 4,443,423	\$ 4,000,874	\$ 3,968,597	\$ 3,974,911	\$ 3,951,523
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0

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.