CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



BUSINESS PLAN 2027

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.

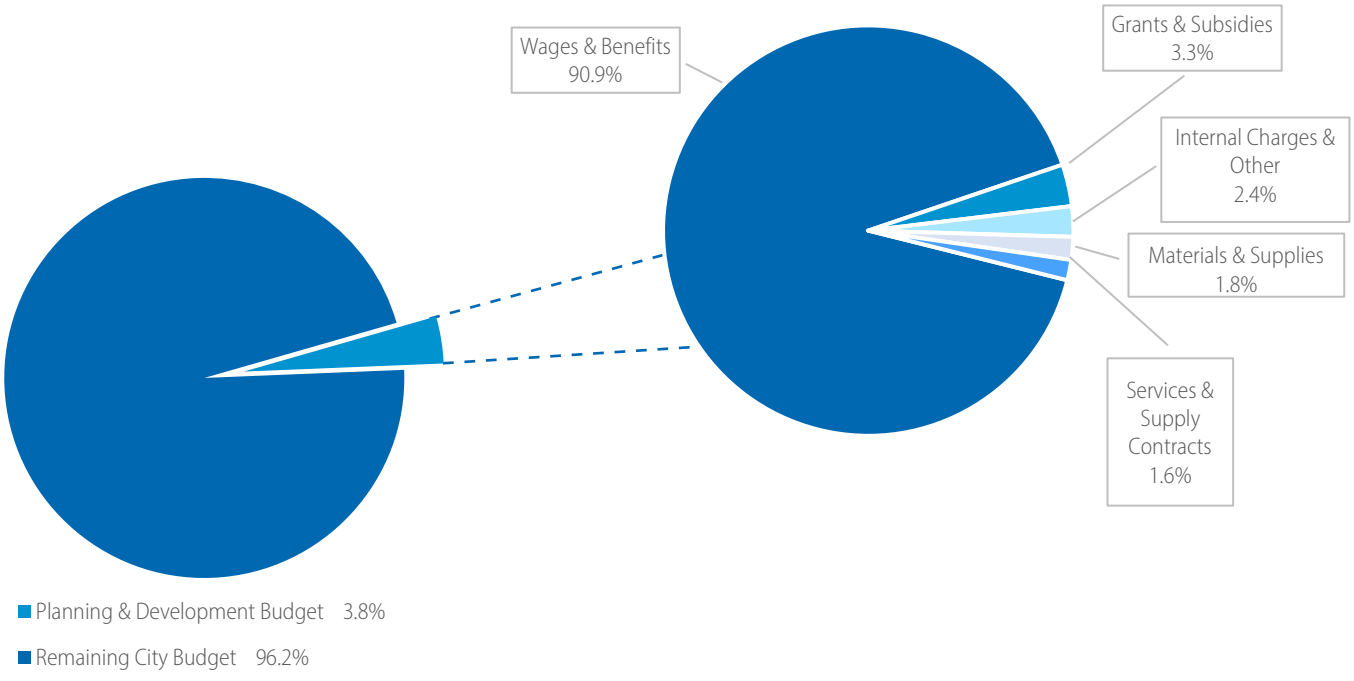
The department works with a wide range of external groups and City departments to develop and implement plans, programs, and projects to guide and manage the City's land use in a sustainable and integrated way, while also enhancing community, safety, pride, wellbeing, livability, and equity.

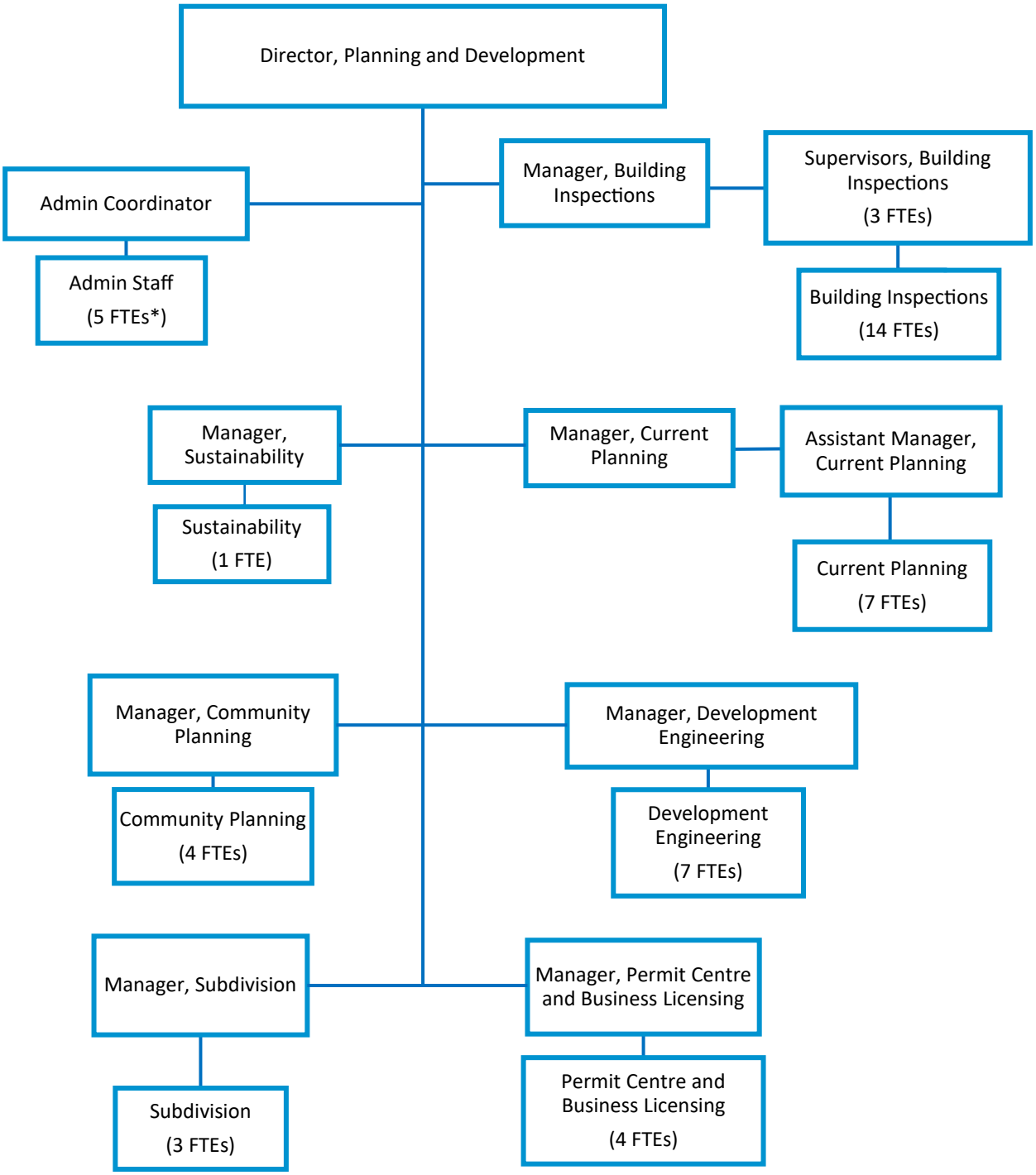
This team interacts with many community and development industry stakeholders and City departments to build a well-designed, healthy and prosperous community.

The Core Services are:

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

Department's Share of the Operating Expense Budget: $9.0 M





**Includes .5 FTE Clerk position budgeted under Planning and Development but reporting to Social Development.*

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Building Inspections

- Building Inspections administers building regulations within the City of Nanaimo through the Building Bylaw, the BC Building Code, and associated legislation. The section is responsible for reviewing and issuing permits for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional construction projects and providing inspection services throughout all stages of construction. The section also provides occupancy approvals, administers the Certified Professional Program, and supports online permitting services.
- Building Inspections conducts inspections to verify compliance with applicable regulations and investigates complaint-driven building violations. Staff provide technical guidance and interpretation of code requirements to property owners, contractors, design professionals, and other City departments to support safe, compliant, and efficient development within the community. The section completes thousands of inspections annually while supporting a growing and increasingly complex development environment.

Subdivision

- Administer the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.
- Review subdivision applications for compliance with municipal bylaws and Federal and Provincial statutes and regulations.
- 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.

Permit Centre & Business Licensing

- 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 troubleshooting online permitting software issues and accepting payments for permit fees.
- Business Licensing is responsible for the administration of 7,072 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, 1,122 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.
- The Business Licence Clerks work regularly and collaboratively with community partners (Island Health, Port Authority, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, Vehicle Safety Authority, RCMP, etc.) and internal departments (Current Planning, Building, Bylaw, Fire Rescue, Engineering, Recreation and Culture and Parks) to ensure that businesses are compliant with municipal and provincial regulations.

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.
- Support a broad range of housing initiatives across City departments.

- Coordinate the collection and distribution of housing related data and deliver Nanaimo's annual Provincial Housing Target Progress Report.

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.
- Coordinate annual monitoring strategy data update and engagement
- 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.

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
- Provide engineering design reviews and permits for driveway access and service connections
- Process works-in-city-streets permits, soil removal and fill permits, and telecommunication company works
- Manage the tree voucher program, issue tree removal permits and review development applications for tree retention recommendations
- Maintain statistics on civil works constructed through development

2026 ACHIEVEMENTS

Building Inspections

- Expansion of Online Permitting Services:
  - Building Inspections continued to expand the use of electronic permit applications through the City's eApply platform, increasing accessibility for applicants and improving the efficiency of permit intake and processing. The system enhancements reduced administrative effort, improved application quality, and supported a more streamlined customer experience. Building on the City's implementation of eApply, additional permit types and workflow improvements have continued to modernize permit service delivery.
- Implementation of Regulatory Changes:
  - Staff continued to implement and interpret changes arising from updates to the BC Building Code and related provincial housing legislation. Ongoing training and knowledge sharing ensured consistency in permit review and inspection practices while supporting the delivery of safe and compliant construction projects and meeting reporting requirements.
- Customer Service and Technical Support:
  - The section continued to provide technical assistance to homeowners, builders, developers, architects, engineers, and internal departments. Staff worked collaboratively with Planning, Engineering, Fire Rescue, and other City departments to support efficient approvals and coordinated service delivery.

Subdivision

- Subdivision Control Bylaw Replacement:
  - Coordinated the replacement of the City's 1989 Subdivision Control Bylaw with a new Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw to clarify the requirements for subdivision approval and reflect current legislative requirements and best practices.
- Servicing Officer Establishment:
  - Supported the establishment of Servicing Officers for the City, as provided for through recent Provincial legislative changes, to allow road dedication for highway purposes and for alternative forms of transportation to be required as a condition of the issuance of a Building Permit.
  - Concurrent Zoning Bylaw amendments were also introduced to reduce the likelihood that development potential would be impacted when road dedication is secured at building permit stage.

New Detached Lots	
Year	**Number of New Lots**
2023	88
2024	42
2025	34
2026 projection	40

Permit Centre & Business Licensing

- eApply: The Permit Centre continues to support Building Inspections in the implementation of eApply, a new online system designed to streamline the permit application process.
- Mobile Food Vending Review & Business Licence Bylaw Amendments:
  - Coordinated amendments to the Business License Bylaw to update the Mobile Food Vending Program and streamline mobile food vending regulations.
  - A Mobile Food Vending Operator's Guidebook was established to streamline the regulatory framework and shift the operational requirements to a guidebook.

Inter-Community Business Licence Bylaw & Agreement:

- Supported the adoption of a new Inter-Community Business Licence Bylaw to strengthen enforcement and ensure equitable licensing practices for mobile businesses across Vancouver Island. This helps reduce administrative and cost burdens by allowing eligible businesses to operate in multiple communities with the purchase of a single license (in addition to the base business license).

Community Planning

- Completed the priority action project to pre-zone appropriate parcels in the Urban Centre and Corridor land use designations for affordable housing.
- Along with the Engineering Department, completed the 'Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw' project and the 'Development Cost Charge Reduction Bylaw' project.

- Completed the City Plan Review project, and the Woodgrove Area Plan project.
- Completed the 'Residential Tenant Assistance Bylaw' project, and the 'Manufactured Home Community Relocation Assistance Policy' project.
- Completed the housing data collection required for the year two Housing Target Progress Report in accordance with the Provincial Ministerial Order to the City of Nanaimo.
- Prepared a 'housing and development' update to Council with a focus on housing data, non-market housing, housing agreements, and housing initiatives (including approval process improvements).
- Conducted research and prepared a report with Zoning Bylaw options regarding emissions intensive heavy industrial uses.
- In cooperation with the Finance Department, assisted in the review of permissive tax exemptions for eligible non-market housing.
- Reported to neighbourhood associations on the progress of their 2025 priority requests, facilitated the fourth annual engagement event, and issued grants to neighbourhood associations.
- Continued implementation of the Heritage Program by facilitating the issuance a Heritage Façade grant for a building on the Community Heritage Register.
- Supported the Current Planning section with the processing of development application files.
- Coordinated departmental status updates to the Integrated Action Plan.

Sustainability

- Completed the first round of projects funded under Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) style Home Energy Retrofit Financing Pilot Program and launched the second intake.
- Prepared to expand the Home Energy Retrofit Financing Program with a third-party financing option.
- Completed Phase 2 of Manufactured Home Park Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction Strategy with funding support from BC Hydro.
- Completed City of Nanaimo's Sea Level Rise Management Plan with funding support from the British Columbia Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).



- Completed the second annual City Plan Monitoring Strategy engagement event with key interest holders and partners.
- Conducted annual 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.
- 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 nine community-led initiatives through Community Environmental Sustainability Project Grant.
- Sponsored Cool It! Climate Leadership Training Program to work with 11 elementary classes and 5 high school classes during the spring semester, reaching 383 students and completing 2,025 actions.

Current Planning

- Completed the Parking Bylaw Review and adopted new off-street parking regulations, as well as updated the City's policy for the consideration of variances to clarify the criteria for evaluating impacts of parking-related variances.
- Launched online pre-application meeting requests through the eApply portal.
- Continued to implement recommendations of the Planning Function Review in Current Planning's staff structure, and filled vacancies for key technical positions.

- Worked with the Community Planning section and consultants to complete the financial feasibility analysis and architectural testing of existing zoning regulations to inform the Zoning Bylaw review.
- Supported Community Planning to complete stakeholder engagement and draft amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to pre-zone lands in support of affordable housing.
- Continued to support external agencies such as BC Housing to complete strategic development applications throughout the city, including several supportive and affordable housing developments.

Development Engineering

- Tree Voucher Program:
  - Established in 2017, the Tree Voucher Program helps expand Nanaimo's urban forest by providing rebates for tree planting on private property. The program is funded through fines and cash-in-lieu contributions related to tree removal and replacement requirements.
  - Since its inception, the program has supported the planting of approximately 6,850 trees on private property. As of August 2026, the City has received 944 tree voucher applications, demonstrating strong community support for growing and preserving Nanaimo's tree canopy.
  - The program provides environmental benefits, enhances neighbourhood livability, and contributes to a healthier, greener community.

eApply for Permits:

- Supported the implementation of the eApply online portal for Planning and Development permits and applications. The use of an online portal has facilitated the public's ability to submit applications easily at their convenience outside of business hours, as well as to make their applications complete which facilitates processing by staff. Permits which come to Development Engineering via E-Apply shown below include applications from January to August 2026:

Permit Applications	Via eApply	Standard Submission	Total
Tree Vouchers	944	0	944
Works in City streets	38	40	78
Soil removal and fill	8	1	9

- Development Engineering Activities:
  - In Quarters 1 to 3 of 2026, Development Engineering carried out the following activities:
  - Received 93 tree removal applications and generated 57 tree removal permits
  - Received 11 telecommunication company works applications and generated 10 permits
  - Reviewed 67 non-commercial building permits for compliance with city engineering standards
  - Reviewed 69 commercial building permits for compliance with city engineering standards
  - Generated 83 access and utility permits
  - Issued 18 sets of design stage acceptance documents
  - Finalized 23 substantial completions for developments projects

New Assets from Development	
Year	**Total Value of New Civil Infrastructure Accepted (in Millions)**
2023	$9.4
2024	n/a
2025	$2.2
2026 projection	$5.6

All Dwelling Units	
Year	**Dwelling Units**
2023	1,170
2024	431
2025	676
2026 projection	800

Total Construction Value	
Year	**Value (in Millions)**
2023	$365
2024	$203
2025	$386
2026 projection	$344

2027 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Building Inspections

- Permit System Enhancements:
  - Continue investment in digital permitting services presents an opportunity to improve customer experience, reduce processing times, and enhance operational efficiency. Further enhancements to eApply and associated business processes will help support increasing permit volumes and evolving customer expectations.
- Staffing, Recruitment and Succession Planning:
  - Recruitment and retention of qualified building officials and other key technical staff remains a challenge throughout British Columbia. Continued investment in staff development, succession planning, and training will be important to maintain service levels and respond to increasing technical and regulatory requirements. Similar staffing pressures have been identified across the Planning and Development Department.
- Service Delivery Excellence:
  - Opportunities exist to further improve permit review timelines, strengthen customer communication, and identify operational efficiencies through process review and technology enhancements. These initiatives support Council's objective of delivering responsive and efficient development approval services.

Subdivision

- Following the adoption of the new Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, other applicable bylaws, policies, and procedures require review to ensure consistency , including the Building Bylaw, Fees and Charges Bylaw, various Council Policies, and internal application procedures.

Permit Centre & Business Licensing

- Undertake a review of development related deposits and deposit release processes.
- Initiate a review of food vending fees, fines and additional charges, including a park user fee review.



Community Planning

- Integrated Action Plan – Version 2.0:
  - In cooperation with all City departments facilitate the process to update the Integrated Action Plan, the library of actions to achieve City Plan goals.
- South Gate Urban Centre Area Plan:
  - Commence the research and engagement process to create the South Gate Urban Centre Area Plan
- Housing Data:
  - Continue to improve access to housing data including rental housing, unit sizes, building types, density and non-market housing.

Sustainability

- City Plan Monitoring and Engagement: Commence the first City Plan Monitoring Report and carry out community-wide engagement.
- Energy Efficiency Opportunities in Community: Enhance outreach and explore tools to support both residential and commercial building owners to improve building energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and incorporate cooling where needed.
- Sea Level Rise Management: Investigate feasibility of recommended actions from the Sea Level Rise Management Plan and consider implementation strategies.

Current Planning

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- Committees: Design Advisory Panel, Board of Variance

Development Engineering

- Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw:
  - Undertake a phased update to the Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw in conjunction with supporting an update of the Urban Forest Strategy. Phase 1 of the Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw update will focus on improving the administration and effectiveness of the existing bylaw. Phase 2 will be a substantial bylaw update to ensure alignment with City Plan objectives concurrent with or following the update of the Urban Forest Strategy.

2027 KEY 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.
Continue to administer Community Environmental Sustainability Grants.
Con tinue to implement and administer the home energy retrofit financing program.
IAP Priority Action #22 – Continue the City's Water Saving Rebate Programs to reduce water consumption.
IAP Priority Action #197 – South Gate Urban Centre Area Plan: Commence the research and engagement process to create the South Gate Urban Centre Area Plan.
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 2026 priority requests.
Complete engagement with the community on planning initiatives such as the South Gate Urban Centre Area Plan, Zoning Bylaw Update, and the Monitoring Strategy.
Governance and Corporate Excellence
Zoning Bylaw Update to take place in 2027 and 2028. This process will include public consultation and alignment with City Plan.
Implementation of the goals identified in the Planning Function Review.
Further implementation of the eApply software – permitting and development approval system improvements.

PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2026 Approved Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget	2030 Draft Budget	2031 Draft Budget
Revenues						
Building Inspections	$ 2,300,500	$ 2,336,700	$ 2,360,067	$ 2,383,667	$ 2,407,504	$ 2,431,579
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	1,375,000	1,392,000	1,405,920	1,419,979	1,434,178	1,448,520
Community Planning	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current Planning	77,500	83,500	84,335	85,178	86,030	86,890
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	20,000	15,000	15,150	15,302	15,455	15,610
Planning & Development Administration	2,000	2,000	2,020	2,040	2,060	2,081
Subdivision	58,000	53,200	53,732	54,270	54,813	55,361
Sustainability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health and Housing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Revenues	**$ 3,833,000**	**$ 3,882,400**	**$ 3,921,224**	**$ 3,960,436**	**$ 4,000,040**	**$ 4,040,041**
Expenditures						
Building Inspections	$ 2,531,237	$ 2,722,652	$ 2,835,138	$ 2,914,006	$ 2,990,781	$ 3,072,459
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	617,749	680,262	691,502	714,513	734,177	754,863
Community Planning	773,396	833,108	863,816	888,059	910,598	934,126
Current Planning	1,280,564	1,356,245	1,412,306	1,454,694	1,490,786	1,527,872
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	924,141	1,146,027	1,178,122	1,216,712	1,249,350	1,283,493
Planning & Development Administration	1,197,799	1,260,538	1,409,813	1,439,898	1,467,826	1,496,938
Subdivision	535,713	587,234	606,551	629,233	642,087	664,313
Sustainability	346,386	364,914	379,150	390,409	400,778	411,532
Health and Housing	719,576	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Expenditures	**$ 8,926,561**	**$ 8,950,980**	**$ 9,376,398**	**$ 9,647,524**	**$ 9,886,383**	**$ 10,145,596**
Net Annual Operating Expenditures	**$ 5,093,561**	**$ 5,068,580**	**$ 5,455,174**	**$ 5,687,088**	**$ 5,886,343**	**$ 6,105,555**
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.0	58.0

**For 2026 funding for the new CUPE contract and management increases is budgeted in committed contingency under Corporate Services*

*** 2026 FTEs were restated to include new position created by bylaw amendment after the adoption of the final budget*

	2026 Approved Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget	2030 Draft Budget	2031 Draft Budget
Expenditure Summary						
Wages & Benefits	$ 7,331,900	$ 8,133,170	$ 8,439,735	$ 8,701,396	$ 8,935,184	$ 9,178,702
Services & Supply Contracts	215,160	139,345	142,345	145,686	148,117	151,001
Materials & Supplies	149,005	159,170	159,664	161,381	159,400	167,630
Internal Charges & Other	211,420	219,795	224,154	228,561	233,182	237,763
Grants & Subsidies	1,019,076	299,500	410,500	410,500	410,500	410,500
Annual Operating Expenditures	**$ 8,926,561**	**$ 8,950,980**	**$ 9,376,398**	**$ 9,647,524**	**$ 9,886,383**	**$ 10,145,596**