

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on
October 8, 2025*

1. Zero Means Zero: Advancing a Zero Percent Property Tax Increase for 2026

Submitted by Mayor Sim

WHEREAS

1. Since being elected in 2022, Council has worked with diligence and firm resolve to reduce annual property tax increases while prioritizing affordability and accountability in City finances;
2. A staff report to Council in spring 2025 projected that a property tax increase for 2026 in the range of 5% to 7% would be required to maintain existing service levels, address contractual obligations, and fund long-deferred infrastructure renewal;
3. In June 2025, Council approved a motion introduced by Mayor Sim directing staff to prepare 2026 budget scenarios that included a zero percent property tax increase, alongside scenarios of 1.5% and 2.5%, with an additional 1% property tax increase for infrastructure renewal as previously directed by Council. This Council direction was in direct response to concerns from residents and businesses about rising costs of living¹;
4. Ongoing fiscal pressures facing the City include inflation, increasing salary pressures, rising utility costs, and a significant infrastructure deficit that requires significant long-term investment;
5. Property tax increases approved by Council of 10.7% in 2023, 7.3% in 2024, and 3.9% in 2025 have helped realign core city services and public priorities to ensure that frontline workers and core service levels residents and businesses expect are protected;
6. Senior levels of government have reduced grants to community organizations, Council has acted to safeguard the City's ongoing support for community grants, recognizing that funding programs are essential during times of austerity and hardship;
7. For the first time in decades, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) budgets have been fully funded to ensure public safety. Library funding has likewise been increased to ensure this essential City service is not only supported and but also accessible and available city-wide; and

¹ <https://council.vancouver.ca/20250618/documents/cfsc20250618min.pdf>

8. Mayor Sim and Council are committed to exploring every option to reduce the burden on taxpayers, control spending, and deliver a balanced operating budget, without compromising the City's ability to provide the core frontline services that residents and businesses expect and are due.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct the City Manager and the General Manager of Finance, Risk, and Supply Chain Management to prepare the City of Vancouver's draft 2026 Operating Budget, based on a zero percent property tax increase, while prioritizing core City services and maintaining community grants, library and community centre services;

FURTHER THAT the draft 2026 Operating Budget prepared on the basis of a zero percent tax increase includes an allocation to infrastructure renewal that is equivalent to one percent of the 2026 property tax levy;

AND FURTHER THAT this direction supersedes Council's June 2025 instruction to develop multiple budget scenarios, and instead establishes a singular focus on achieving a zero percent property tax increase for the 2026 Operating Budget.

* * * * *