

MEMORANDUM

November 14, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief of External Relations
Andrew Naklicki, Chief Human Resources Officer
Ben Hyman, Chief Librarian and CEO, Vancouver Public Library
Corrie Okell, General Manager, Development, Buildings and Licensing
Francie Connell, Director of Legal Services
Josh White, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
Karen Fry, Fire Chief and General Manager, Vancouver Fire Rescue Services
Lon LaClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services
Margaret Wittgens, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Steve Rai, Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department
Steve Jackson, General Manager, Parks and Recreation
Pragya Grewal, Director, Financial Planning and Analysis
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Colin Knight
General Manager, Finance and Supply Chain Management

SUBJECT: Memo #2: 2026 Proposed Budget – Response to Councillor questions

Dear Mayor and Council,

The purpose of this memo is to provide responses to the questions posed by Councillors at the November 12th Council meeting related to 2026 Proposed Budget.

Memo #1, sent November 12th, 2025 has also been included as Appendix 1 for ease of review.

1. What is the \$\$ amount for combined property taxes and fees per household compared to Budget Outlook?

The estimated impact of a 7% property tax increase as indicated in 2026-30 Budget Outlook for 2026 tax bill would be ~\$101 increase for a median strata property assessed at \$0.8M and ~\$280 increase for a median strata property assessed at \$2.2M.

2. Between 2015-2020, City's full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) grew by under a 1000 FTEs - where were those FTEs placed?

City of Vancouver	2015 Actuals	2016 Actuals	2017 Actuals	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2015-2020 Change
Full-time equivalents*	7,590	7,656	7,992	8,273	8,507	8,304	714

*The FTE estimates include Public Safety.

Between 2015 and 2020, staffing at the City increased by 714 full-time equivalent positions (FTE). The FTE growth supported service delivery, public safety, and infrastructure, reflecting the City's commitment to front-line services and emerging priorities. Most additions were in public safety, including police recruits to address vacancies and retirements, civilian staff from the 2018–2019 Operational Review. Staffing also ramped up to deliver capital plan projects—design, construction, and mobility improvements—while adding resources for maintenance, public realm cleanliness, development inspections, and new initiatives like bike-share and ride-hailing programs.

3. How much of our budget is being devoted to seismic preparedness?

As part of the proposed 2026 Capital Budget, City will be investing a total of \$18.2 million in initiatives related to Seismic preparedness. The specific initiatives include \$12 million in new budget for Cambie Bridge Seismic upgrades and \$6.3 million for seismic upgrades for potable water assets.

In addition to these capital investments, VEMA continues to advance earthquake preparedness through ongoing updates of our emergency response plans including ensuring our Disaster Staging Area and emergency sheltering supply containers across the city remain fully operational and ready for deployment should they be needed in an earthquake response.

4. Can you confirm that the LAP (Leisure Access Pass) is not going to be eliminated in the proposed budget?

The Leisure Access Passes are not being eliminated.

Community centres are front-line services and are being maintained in the 2026 Proposed budget, which includes the leisure access pass.

- How much revenue is this fee expected to generate annually?
- When, and to what type of event markets, would this fee apply?
- Conversely, when and to what type of event markets would this fee *not* apply to?
- What are the specific additional costs to the City & Engineering Department in terms of cost recovery necessitated by this fee.
- Any other clarifying details that might help in understanding the fee.

The proposed updated market permit fees are \$200 per day for locations outside Downtown and \$400 per day for locations in Downtown, with the exception of higher fees for only three high-value public spaces that regularly receive multiple, conflicting event requests: 800 Robson, 600 James Street West and 1800 Davie Street. The proposed fees for these three public spaces range from \$1000 to \$1500 depending on low/peak season, and were developed based on a market survey of comparable high-value locations across Metro Vancouver.

Since 2023, the City has seen a 150% increase in applications for commercial markets, requiring significant additional staff resources to process permits while maintaining service levels and supporting free community events during peak months. The proposed updated Special Event Market Permit fees are intended to recover City costs, reflect the commercial nature of this use, and ensure equitable access to key public spaces. The fees are anticipated to generate an additional \$150,000 in revenue for the City.

From 2019 to July 2025, the VPD has referred over \$303 million in assets to the provincial Civil Forfeiture Office (CFO). During the same period the VPD received grants from the CFO totaling \$1.3 million – which is 0.4% of the value of assets referred.

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\$1 million). Hence the net market value of VPD referrals to the CFO may be lower than the above-mentioned amount. It is also worth while to note that CFO referrals do not always result in the seizure or forfeiture of all the assets. In summary, the VPD gets a very small flow back of funds via grants and funding from the CFO referrals as noted above.

Should you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact me at colin.knight@vancouver.ca or (604) 873-7610.

Colin Knight

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Appendix 1

MEMO #1 Responses to Questions from the Council meeting on November 12, 2025 (sent November 12, 2025)

1. What is the participation of non-English speakers in the Budget survey?

For the 2026 Budget Survey, we received a total of 8 completed surveys in languages other than English. We continue to provide summaries of budget information as well as advertise engagement opportunities in languages other than English (Mandarin, Cantonese and Punjabi) to follow guidance of the City's Language Access Policy and ensure equity and inclusion. 19% of all survey respondents identified having Asian origins, so there are likely respondents who speak a non-English language at home but chose to respond to the survey in English.

2. 20% of residents and businesses answered "other" for the Budget Survey question that discussed preferred tax scenarios, what was their opinion?

Approximately 20% of all respondents opted out of selecting an option presented (0%, 1.5%, 2.5%, and 5% tax increases) when respondents were asked to consider property tax increases in relation to services. Of these "other" responses, there is still a mix of support for property tax increases. Many comments suggested opportunities for the City to reduce spending and offset property tax increase, including financial management practices and the VPD budget. Others were supportive of a higher increase to property taxes to provide additional service enhancements.

3. How much of the VPD budget is transferred to higher levels of govt and what percentage do we get back?

The Province of British Columbia provides municipalities with revenue from traffic violations. From 2022 to 2025, approximately \$13 million is transferred from the Province to the City of Vancouver for this purpose annually.

Under provincial policy, 100% of net revenues from traffic violations are returned to municipalities that directly fund policing. These funds are intended to support community safety initiatives and address local policing priorities.

4. About 20 years ago in the US, garbage routing efficiency was figured and generated \$20M in efficiencies. Is our engineering department working on something like this?

We have saved 10% in labour hours (about 8000 hrs or about \$500k -- including 50% reduction in overtime) and a 15% reduction in garbage truck vehicle use in efficiency improvements, including route optimization, in 2025 compared to 2024.

5. How does the change in special event market fee affect festival and event?

The increased special event market fee is only commercial retail/pop-up markets, and does not apply to cultural event (such as Jazz Festival) organized by not-for-profit organization or farmer's market. Not-for-profit organization and events continue to qualify for in kind support under the Fest Share program.

Over the past two years, the volume of special event markets—particularly those with a commercial focus—has increased substantially. This increase has placed added pressure on public spaces, many of which are also used for free community events and cultural programming. A fee structure can help support balanced and sustainable management of these spaces. This approach promotes equitable access by balancing the needs of revenue-generating events with those of free special events.