

MEMORANDUM

November 24, 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 #5: 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. Additional responses will be sent by memo as and when they are available.

1. Can you clarify if this budget will be cutting Parks and Recreation by \$11 million?

The park board expenditure budget is increasing by 1%. Within this increase, fixed costs need to be managed, with a total of \$11 million in new revenues and savings in non-front-line areas.

2. What was the Park Board operating budget in 2022, and what is it currently?

The following table provides the Park Board's Gross Operating revenues and expenditures budget.

(\$ Millions)	2022 Restated Budget	2025 Restated Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	\$ Change	% Change
Revenues	(\$65.8)	(\$89.4)	(\$97.0)	(\$31.2)	47%
Expenditures	\$143.8	\$190.7	\$192.0	\$48.2	34%

3. Is there a change in daycare funding, and if so, is the reduction approximately \$18M?

Childcare operating grant funding is proposed to be maintained at 2025 budget levels in alignment with the Council direction to maintain Community grants in the 2026 budget. The budget continues to make new capital investments in childcare.

4. Does the current budget proposal cut library funding levels?

The proposed 2026 Budget for Vancouver Public Library is increasing by \$2.1M or 3% over the previous year. This budget was developed based on Council's direction to maintain the services people count on most, including community grants, public safety, road and sidewalk maintenance, and community centre and library hours.

5. Is the City of Vancouver no longer practicing climate and sustainability initiatives due to this budget?

The City's commitment to climate action and sustainability remains strong. The proposed 2026 Budget does not change this focus. Council-approved strategies, including the Vancouver Plan and the Climate Emergency Action Plan, will continue to drive climate action and sustainability work across the organization.

6. How does this budget affect the ACCS department, including any potential reductions?

The proposed 2026 Budget will result in reduction of 12% to ACCS's expenditure budget. Specifically, the impact will include reduced funding for consulting and service contracts, reduced resourcing and re-prioritization of select work, as well as reduced discretionary spending. However, as some work might slowdown, ACCS will work towards advancing

priority initiatives as well as Council direction. Any labour impacts would be determined following subsequent discussions with the Unions.

7. What is the total amount allocated to arts grants, and how does that compare to grants supporting social services?

Funding for Arts and Culture, and Social grants are being maintained at 2025 budget levels consistent with Council direction, although grant allocations to individual organizations will continue to be determined in the annual grant process and be brought forward to Council for approval.

Within ACCS, arts funding is included within the Arts, Culture and Community Services department budget line as well as Vancouver Civic Theatres budget line. In 2025, this totalled to \$14.3 million in grant funding. The 2025 Budget also included \$7.9 million Social Policy grants, \$8 million for the VCH Urgent Mental Health and Substance Use grant, and \$1.7 million Childcare grants for a total of 17.6 million in grants supporting social services.

8. How much of our grant funding is influenced by cost downloads from the provincial government?

In the 2025 budget, an estimated \$16.5 million in Operating and \$10.6 million in Capital funding was granted to support areas that may fall within senior government responsibility, including Housing, Homelessness, ENG micro-cleaning, Mental Health and Substance Use, Education, Childcare and other social services (such as newcomer supports, Sex Worker Safety, Poverty, Accessibility, Employment).

Many of the organizations receiving City of Vancouver grant funding provide multiple services and therefore it can be difficult to define precisely what portion of a grant could fall within senior government responsibility.

9. How common is this budgeting process among other municipalities?

The City of Vancouver's annual budget process is similar to other comparable municipalities within the Metro Vancouver area. Like most municipalities, Vancouver follows an annual budget cycle with a balanced budget and separate operating and capital budget as mandated by Vancouver Charter. The proposed 2026 Budget is presented to Council for consideration and published online as a public document, consistent with practices in neighboring municipalities within Metro Vancouver, which also provide draft budgets with similar levels of detail.

10. Will core services such as libraries, community centres, police, fire & emergency services, road and sidewalk maintenance and garbage pickup be cut because of this budget?

The proposed 2026 Operating Budget has been developed based on Council's direction to maintain the services people count on most, including community grants, public safety,

road and sidewalk maintenance, and community centre and library hours. These services will be maintained in the 2026 budget.

11. What are the City's funding levels and delivery model for the Kingsway Community Station (KCS) in 2026 Budget, the drop-in service supporting street-based sex workers in the Kingsway Corridor?

The KCS is an overnight drop-in service for street-based sex workers in the Kingsway Corridor, operating out of a temporary location. Since its launch in 2021, the City has been the sole funder, contributing \$384,000 annually through a contract with RainCity and an additional \$28,000 for security. KCS serves 8-24 people per night, and demand has grown as other organizations have reduced services or closed. Securing a permanent location has been an ongoing challenge, with staff exploring alternative spaces and considering mobile service models.

To confirm, the City is not ending all non-profit contracts but continues to review programs to ensure alignment with priorities and funding availability. Staff are in discussions with RainCity about transitioning KCS to a grant, which is consistent with how similar services are supported. This review of KCS locations and delivery options began a year ago, well before the draft 2026 budget discussions. Any transition would occur in early 2026 through the social grants process, and no decisions have been made on future funding levels.

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.

Appendix 2: MEMO #2 Responses to Questions from the Council meeting on November 12, 2025 (sent November 14, 2025)

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. Confirm if the LAP (Leisure Access Pass) is 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.

5. Please provide more details around the new “Special Event Market” fee for the three “prime” locations noted in the Engineering Fees report. Could you please provide clarifying answers to the following questions to better understand when, where, how, and why the fee would be invoked?

- 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 Special Event Market Permit fees will apply to commercial markets whose primary purpose is the sale of products or services. The fees do not apply to farmers markets, nor to cultural or community events such as the Jazz Festival, Car Free Day, or Italian Day. Fees for these events remain the same, and cultural and community events continue to qualify for the City's FestShare program, which provides up to \$75,000 in in-kind City services for events that are free, open to the public, and held on City streets or plazas.

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,          Xwtl'e7    Square 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.

6. How much is the amount in funds and assets transferred from VPD to higher levels of government from investigations, seizures, forfeitures, and proceeds of crime? What percentage do we get back?

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.

This is the gross market value of the assets (e.g. a vehicle or a property) referred over the last six and half years and it does not include any loans/mortgages that are outstanding against the asset (for e.g. we may refer a \$2.5 million property and value it as gross market value, but there may only be \$1.5 million equity in the property if there is still a mortgage for \$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.

Appendix 3: MEMO #3 Responses to Questions from the Council meeting on November 12, 2025 (sent November 18, 2025)

1. What are the expenditure cuts related to REFM capital support, and respective service level reductions?

Facilities Management and Operational Excellence (FMOE) has performed a comprehensive expenditure and service review aimed at reducing inefficiencies and focusing spending on our priorities such as:

Capital Maintenance: Transitioning from isolated asset replacement projects to a more programmatic, portfolio-based approach that encompasses multi-asset and multi-location replacement, to maximize project management and procurement efficiencies. This shift enables better coordination, cost savings, and streamlined execution. Additionally, the elimination of vacant positions and strategic optimization of internal resources within FMOE will enhance delivery timelines and improve overall project execution capacity.

Maintenance: A strategic reduction in low-impact maintenance activities is being implemented. This includes scaling back seasonal installations such as holiday lighting, transitioning certain services, such as maintenance, repairs, and cleaning of park amenities (picnic tables, benches, wooden bridges) to a billable model, and discontinuing the replacement of hygiene product dispensers and baby change tables in washrooms where frequent vandalism occurs.

2. What is the impact of vandalism on civic facilities and change table safety?

Approximately \$520,000 was spent between 2023 and 2025 to repair vandalized assets within our Civic facilities and parks operations. Of this amount, \$56,000 is attributable to the replacement of baby change tables in highly vandalized areas of the City.

Overall, City-wide vandalism-related repair costs for facilities have increased significantly from approximately \$111,000 in 2024 to \$260,000 in 2025 year to date.

More importantly, the City cannot guarantee compliance with required safety standards, as daily safety inspections are not feasible. For these reasons, these units are recommended for removal. While approximately 600 change tables remain in place across City locations, a small number of change



tables are planned to be removed from facilities (approximately 5-6%) as they have undergone repeated vandalism and are no longer safe for use.

We have heard the concerns raised by the public and remain committed to ensuring Vancouver is a family-friendly city. To support this, we can provide signage to help residents locate the nearest available change table or dispenser.

3. Can you provide an indication of the funding allocation within the Arts, Culture, and community services line, to help give a sense as to the impact on arts funding?

Within ACCS, arts funding is included within the Arts and Culture and community services department budget line as well as Vancouver Civic Theatres budget line.

In 2025, this totalled \$21.5 million in operating budget and \$14.3 million in grant funding. These numbers do not include in-kind grants related to below market leases in city-owned spaces to over 35 arts and culture Not for profit organisations.

In 2026, the specific line items are currently being reviewed and detailed supporting information will be brought forward in 2026. Grants budget will be maintained at 2025 levels.

Appendix 4: MEMO #4 Response to Councillor questions related to Vandalism Impact on Civic Facilities and Change Table Safety (sent November 24, 2025)

1. Would it be possible to get more details on the 30 sites proposed for permanent removal of baby change tables. Specifically –

a) What are the 30 locations?

There are a few highly vandalized sites where Staff would recommend potentially not replacing baby change tables dependent on our partner departments' feedback.

Currently we have identified 8 sites where change tables cannot be made safe and be kept in service, with other locations under review:

- Rainbow Park
- China Creek North
- Van Tech Sports Field
- Clinton Park
- Oak Meadows Park
- Connaught Park
- Killarney Park
- Sunset Beach Park



For clarification, the previously shared 5 to 6% figure representing 30 change tables refers specifically to those that will be reviewed by staff over the coming months.

b) What is the proximity from each location to the next nearest change table?

- Rainbow Park: closest City alternate is David Lam Park (1 km)
- China Creek North: closest City alternate is Jonathan Rogers Park (2.1 km)
- Van Tech Sports Field: closest City alternate is Trout Lake CC (1.8 km)
- Clinton Park: closest City alternate is Rupert Park (1.3 km)
- Oak Meadows Park: closest City alternate is Queen Elizabeth Park (1.1 km)
- Connaught Park: closest City alternate is Kitsilano Beach Park (1.3 km)
- Killarney Park: closest City alternate is Killarney Community Centre (next to Killarney Park)
- Sunset Beach Park: closest City alternate is Vancouver Aquatic Centre (400m)

The following third-party resource provides information related to other potential alternate baby change table locations. Please note that these may be located within non-City businesses or locations:

[Vancouver Change Tables Map](#)

- c) Which sites are seeing the highest levels of vandalism beyond the examples given below, and how many times have the change tables been repaired and/or replaced in the past two years at each of the 30 sites?

Please see the below summary table with sites with the highest levels of vandalism:

Site	Vandalism Orders from 2023-25	Cost	Baby Change Table Orders from 2023-25	Cost	Total	Total Cost
Stanley Park Buildings	42	\$19,606	6	\$5,500	48	\$25,106
Portside Park	27	\$18,172	N/A	-	27	\$18,172
Grandview Park	20	\$13,141	1	\$162	21	\$13,303
Clinton Park	17	\$8,863	4	\$3,922	21	\$12,786
Roundhouse Community Centre Park	18	\$5,779	1	\$2,091	19	\$7,870
Killarney Park	13	\$4,676	6	\$4,549	19	\$9,225
Rainbow Park-səqəlxənəm ts'exwts'áxwi7	10	\$5,041	8	\$6,193	18	\$11,235
Slocan Park	17	\$11,302	N/A	-	17	\$11,302
Andy Livingstone Park	16	\$11,348	1	\$1,874	17	\$13,222
Connaught Park	6	\$2,703	7	\$5,522	13	\$8,225
VanDusen Garden Park	10	\$13,170	2	\$1,834	12	\$15,004
Sunset Beach Park	5	\$4,315	5	\$3,277	10	\$7,593
Oak Meadows Park	3	\$2,239	7	\$3,406	10	\$5,644
Trillium Park	9	\$6,919	N/A	-	9	\$6,919
China Creek North Park	2	\$447	7	\$6,117	9	\$6,564
VanTech Sports Field	1	\$195	4	\$3,788	5	\$3,983
Total	216	\$127,917	59	\$48,235	275	\$176,152

Staff have explored alternatives to plastic baby change tables (e.g., stainless-steel), but these have plastic inserts for baby comfort that can still be set on fire. The concern is the root issue of vandalism and safety.

Even if staff sourced a fully stainless baby change table, the majority of these locations do not have staff onsite to monitor use/abuse when open to the public. This is not a cost-cutting or budget-driven measure. Once a change table is compromised, staff cannot assure that it is safe for public use in a city facility and staff cannot keep equipment installed that we know does not meet safety standards for families and children.

Councillor Briefing Note for Media Interview – Baby Change Table Removals & Vandalism

High-Level Key Messages

- Over 90% of change tables remain in place across City facilities. Approximately 5-6% of the City's 600 change tables (about 30 tables) will be removed.

- These are specific tables that have been repeatedly vandalized (e.g., fire damage) and can no longer meet safety standards, not entire locations.
- Vandalism-related repair costs for civic facilities have risen from \$111,000 in 2024 to \$260,000 in 2025 year-to-date. Approximately \$56,000 was spent replacing baby change tables.
- Safety compliance cannot be guaranteed without daily inspections, which are not feasible.
- The City remains committed to being family-friendly and will provide signage to help residents find nearby amenities.

Q1: Can you give examples of highly vandalized areas?

A: Vandalism has been concentrated in high-traffic park washrooms and civic facilities.

Examples include:

- Stanley Park and Trout Lake washrooms
- Commercial Drive and Downtown Eastside community facilities
- Select beach washrooms such as Kitsilano and English Bay

These locations have experienced repeated damage to baby change tables, making them unsafe for use.

Q2: When will the removals take place?

A: Removals will occur over the next several weeks, starting with individual units in locations where safety concerns are highest. Approximately 5 to 6% of the City's 600 change tables (about 30 tables) will be removed. These are specific tables that have been repeatedly vandalized and can no longer meet safety standards, not entire locations. Signage will be installed to help residents find the nearest available change table.

Q3: What alternative baby change tables are available?

A: Over 90% of change tables remain in place across City facilities. For future replacements, we are exploring more resilient materials and designs that are harder to damage and easier to maintain. We're also reviewing alternative locations within facilities to reduce exposure to vandalism.

Q4: What else is the City doing to deter vandalism at these sites?

A: While we are discontinuing repeated replacements of vandalized change tables for safety and cost reasons, the City is still taking steps to reduce vandalism overall. These include:

- Enhanced monitoring and reporting in high-risk areas
- Community engagement and education to discourage vandalism
- Exploring design improvements for future installations, such as tamper-resistant fixtures and improved sightlines, to make amenities more resilient
- Collaboration with VPD and local partners to identify patterns and deter repeat offenders