



REPORT TO COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON POLICY AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

APRIL 1, 2026

A meeting of the Standing Committee of Council on Policy and Strategic Priorities was held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 9:32 am, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall. This Council meeting was convened in person and via electronic means as authorized by the Part 14 of the *Procedure By-law*.

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Meiszner, Chair* (Leave of Absence, Civic Business, 1 – 2:30 pm)
Mayor Ken Sim*
Councillor Rebecca Bligh
Councillor Lisa Dominato, Vice Chair*
Councillor Pete Fry
Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung
Councillor Mike Klassen
Councillor Lucy Maloney
Councillor Brian Montague
Councillor Sean Orr
Councillor Lenny Zhou

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Tina Penney, Deputy City Clerk
Julie Emmerson, Meeting Coordinator

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh People. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

The Chair also recognized the immense contributions of the City of Vancouver's team members who work hard every day to help make our city an incredible place to live, work, and play.

CONDOLENCES - Mr. Thind

The Mayor expressed condolences to the Sikh community on the passing of Mr. Thind.

PROCLAMATION – Sikh Heritage Month

The Mayor proclaimed the month of April 2026 as Sikh Heritage Month in the city of Vancouver, and invited community members to the podium to accept the proclamation and say a few words.

MATTERS ADOPTED ON CONSENT

MOVED by Councillor Dominato
SECONDED by Councillor Klassen

THAT the Committee adopt Reports 2 to 4 on consent.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND REPORT 2
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

REPORTS

1. 2026 Animal Welfare Grant January 26, 2026

Staff from Development, Buildings and Licensing responded to questions.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Dominato

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

THAT Council approve five (5) Animal Welfare Grants totalling \$15,034, the total amount allocated in the 2026 budget for this purpose, to the following organizations:

i.	Paws for Hope Animal Foundation	\$7,000
ii.	VOKRA (Vancouver Orphan Kitten Rescue Association)	\$4,034
iii.	Atira Women's Resource Society	\$2,000
iv.	Greyhaven Exotic Bird Sanctuary	\$1,000
v.	Wildlife Rescue Association of BC	\$1,000

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY (Vote No. 11497)
(Mayor Sim absent for the vote)

2. 245 East Broadway Street – Vernon Block – Façade Grant March 10, 2026

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

- A. THAT Council approve a facade grant of up to \$100,000 to the owner of lands having a civic address of 245 East Broadway (PID: 023-519-690; Lot A Block 52

District Lot 200A Plan 29514 (the “Property”)), for the rehabilitation of two principal façades of the building known as the Vernon Block (the “Heritage Building”), which is listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register and protected by a Council approved Designation By-law, as contemplated by Combined Permit DB-2023-01433 (the “Application”). The source of funds is the 2026 Capital Budget for the *Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program*.

- B. THAT the owner of the Property, referenced in A above, KW One Holdings Ltd (the “Owner”), be required to enter into an agreement with the City, to be registered against title to the Property as a covenant under section 219 of the *Land Title Act*, to ensure continued maintenance of minimum fifteen years, the rehabilitation to be overseen by a qualified heritage consultant, and protection of the heritage property during the rehabilitation work.
- C. THAT the agreement described in B above shall be prepared, registered and given priority over all existing financial charges, to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal Services in consultation with the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability.
- D. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council’s adoption of A to C above unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by respective parties.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT AND A
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY (Vote No. 11508)

**3. Housekeeping and Miscellaneous Updates to the Vancouver Building By-law and the Electrical By-law
March 18, 2026**

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

- A. THAT Council approve, in principle, various housekeeping amendments, and minor technical changes to the Vancouver Building By-law No. 14343, as attached in Appendix A of the Report dated March 18, 2026, entitled, “Housekeeping and Miscellaneous Updates to the Vancouver Building By-law and the Electrical By-law”, to come into force and take effect upon enactment;

FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward the necessary by-law amendments for enactment by Council, generally as set out in Appendix A of the above noted-report.

- B. THAT Council approve, in principle, various housekeeping amendments, and changes to the Electrical By-law No. 5563, as attached in Appendix B of the Report dated March 18, 2026, entitled, “Housekeeping and Miscellaneous Updates to the Vancouver Building By-law and the Electrical By-law”, to come into force and take effect upon enactment;

FURTHER THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to bring forward the necessary by-law amendments for enactment by Council, generally as set out in Appendix B of the above-noted report.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT (Vote No. 11509)

**4. Contract Award for the Provision of a Recreation Management System
March 16, 2026**

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

THAT Council authorize City staff to negotiate an agreement for the Provision of a Recreation Management System for Vancouver Park Board with The Active Network, Ltd. with an initial three-year term and three additional two-year optional extensions (the "Agreement"), for an estimated contract value of \$1,080,000 plus applicable taxes over the initial three-year term and estimated total contract value of \$3,744,000 plus applicable taxes over the entire nine-year term, which will be funded from the Park Board Operating Budget;

FURTHER THAT Council delegate its authority to execute the Agreement to the City's Director of Legal Services, Chief Procurement Officer, and General Manager of the Vancouver Park Board.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT (Vote No. 11510)

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTIONS

1. Supporting the 2026 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade and Festival

The Mayor introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from five speakers who spoke in support of the motion.

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During discussion, Chair Meiszner ceded the Chair to Vice-Chair Dominato to provide comments and resumed the Chair once finished.

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MOVED by Mayor Sim
SECONDED by Councillor Klassen

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Vaisakhi has long been celebrated as a spring harvest festival in the Punjab region of South Asia, bringing communities together for centuries in celebration of renewal, gratitude, and shared prosperity;
2. The Khalsa Diwan Society of Vancouver, founded in 1906, has long served as a cornerstone community institution supporting spiritual life, cultural traditions, and community service for generations of Sikh Canadians;
3. The Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade, organized annually by the Khalsa Diwan Society at the Ross Street Temple in South Vancouver, has grown into one of Vancouver's largest single-day festivals, attracting up to 250,000 attendees each year;
4. The 2026 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade will take place on Saturday, April 11, 2026, beginning at the Khalsa Diwan Society on Ross Street and featuring vibrant floats, music, community performances, and the Sikh tradition of langar, in which volunteers provide free food and refreshments to all attendees;
5. The festival is free and open to everyone and is widely enjoyed by the broader Vancouver community, bringing together residents and visitors in a spirit of inclusivity, hospitality, and service;
6. The event requires extensive planning and coordination, including traffic management and public safety planning, with road closures anticipated from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. affecting major corridors in South Vancouver such as Main Street and Fraser Street;
7. The Khalsa Diwan Society of Vancouver has proudly organized the parade and festival for 47 years, supported by community and sponsors;
8. The costs associated with organizing large public events, particularly security and safety requirements, have increased significantly in recent years;
9. In order to help manage rising operational costs while ensuring the continued success of the celebration, organizers have modified the 2026 parade route to avoid the most costly security segment along Marine Drive, instead proceeding north along Ross Street and west along 57th Avenue toward Main Street; and
10. Despite strong fundraising efforts by the Khalsa Diwan Society, the organizers have identified a budget shortfall of approximately \$45,000 for the 2026 parade and festival.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council approve a one-time extraordinary grant of up to \$45,000 from the City's 2026 Operating Budget, or another funding source deemed appropriate by the General Manager of Finance, to the Khalsa Diwan Society of Vancouver to

assist with costs associated with organizing and delivering the 2026 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade and Festival scheduled for Saturday, April 11, 2026;

FURTHER THAT this grant support is extraordinary and one-time in nature intended solely to address the unique circumstances arising this year.

- B. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute the grant agreement, referenced in A above, for the associated amount that includes terms and conditions that are consistent with the intentions of the motion entitled, "Supporting the 2026 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade and Festival", that satisfy the City's Director of Legal Services, and that disburse the grant described in the same motion to the City Manager or their designate.
- C. THAT Council deem the Khalsa Diwan Society to be an organization contributing to the culture, beautification, health or welfare of the City, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, in respect of the grant referenced in A above.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND A
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY (Vote No. 11498)

2. Fostering Inclusive and Diverse Democracy Through Harassment Prevention

Councillor Orr introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from one speaker who spoke in support of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Orr
SECONDED by Councillor Maloney

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Democracy is strongest when everyone is able to participate fully and safely, and contribute to the well-being of their community;
2. Across Canada and in neighbouring jurisdictions, democratic discourse and respectful debate are deteriorating at all orders of government, with elected officials increasingly subject to threats, harassment, and abuse;
3. This toxic climate disproportionately affects women, Indigenous peoples, racialized individuals, and members of other equity-deserving groups, discouraging them from seeking or remaining in elected office and depriving communities of diverse perspectives and effective leadership;
4. Social media platforms have amplified disrespectful dialogue, personal attacks, disinformation, and toxic engagement directed at those in public life;

5. Better decisions are made when democracy is respectful and constructive and when the voices of diverse genders, identities, ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities are heard and represented around council tables;
6. In 2024, women elected representatives from across Halton Region in Ontario formed a group called H.E.R. (Halton Elected Representatives), which pledged to speak out against harassment and negativity in politics and called on elected officials to uphold the highest standards of conduct;
7. H.E.R. Halton, led by Burlington Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, launched a national campaign called Elect Respect to promote healthy democratic engagement and safe, inclusive, respectful environments for all elected officials and candidates;
8. As of March 2026, the Elect Respect pledge has been endorsed by over 228 elected officials, 54 municipalities, and 13 boards across Canada, though no British Columbia municipality has yet adopted the resolution; and
9. With a general municipal election scheduled for October 2026, endorsing the Elect Respect campaign signals Vancouver's commitment to a respectful and inclusive electoral process for all candidates and voters.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Vancouver City Council endorse the Elect Respect pledge and commits to:

- a. Treating others with respect in all settings. Public, private, and online;
- b. Rejecting and speaking out against harassment, abuse, and personal attacks;
- c. Focusing debate and political discussion on ideas and policies, not personal attacks;
- d. Helping build a supportive culture where people of all backgrounds feel safe to run for and hold office, and to engage in public life;
- e. Calling on relevant authorities for the protection of elected officials who face abuse or threats; and
- f. Modelling integrity and respect in public life, holding one another to the highest standards of conduct;

FURTHER THAT Vancouver City Council call on elected officials, candidates, elector organizations, and community members to support the Elect Respect campaign and sign the online pledge at www.electrespect.ca.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 11499)

3. Reversing the Costly Ban on Supportive Housing

Councillor Bligh introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from seven speakers who spoke in support and 28 speakers who spoke in opposition of the motion.

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During the hearing of speakers, the Committee recessed at 11:59 am and reconvened at 1:08 pm with Deputy Mayor Kirby-Yung in the Chair.

At 2:26 pm, following the conclusion of public speakers, Chair Meiszner assumed the chair.

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MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Maloney

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver is in a housing crisis, where it is increasingly difficult to afford housing whether one earns \$200,000 per year or \$20,000 per year;
2. Homelessness is getting worse, with a 9% increase in individuals experiencing homelessness from 2023 to 2025 in Greater Vancouver, including a 26% increase in unsheltered homelessness in Vancouver alone;¹
3. Local businesses are closing, in part because high crime rates are making it unaffordable to keep the doors open;²
4. There can be no solution to the affordability crisis without building more affordable homes, no solution to the homelessness crisis without building more supportive homes, and no solution to the drug crisis without investing more in community services;
5. Supportive housing provides not only homes, but integrated services that are essential to reducing homelessness and drug use, and improving community safety;

¹ 2025 Point-in-Time Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver: Preliminary Data Report, prepared for Lu'ma Native Housing Society by Homelessness Services Association of BC in consultation with the IHSC (July 2025). Vancouver, BC

² <https://www.ctvnews.ca/vancouver/article/vpd-lease-of-former-london-drugs-property-means-tax-revenue-loss-for-city-of-vancouver/>

6. On February 18, 2026, the Carney government provided funding for 700 new supportive housing units across BC - and the current mayor's policy means none of the funding will be invested in Vancouver;
7. On February 26, 2025, the Ken Sim-led majority on Council adopted a motion titled "Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity", which directed staff to pause City contributions of land or funding for homelessness response supportive housing indefinitely; and
8. The ban on net-new supportive housing investments needlessly exacerbates the issues already faced by the limited supply of social and supportive housing that exists.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to enable City contributions of land or funding for homelessness response supportive housing developments, to allow the provincial and federal government to place supportive housing investments in Vancouver, including projects focused on replacing existing SRO buildings or TMH projects.

LOST (Vote No. 11500)

(Councillors Kirby-Yung, Klassen, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed)

(Councillors Dominato and Meiszner absent for the vote)

4. Creating a City of Vancouver Festival Support Fund

Councillor Fry introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from two speakers who spoke in support and one speaker who spoke to other aspects of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Fry

SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. In Vancouver, community events and festivals help define the vibrancy of the city;
2. The City of Vancouver benefits significantly from the economic, social, cultural, and community-building impacts of festivals including economic activity, tourism, social cohesion, neighbourhood vibrancy, reconciliation, and cultural expression;
3. Vancouver's free festivals and cultural events are facing unprecedented financial strain, with long-standing events reporting rising costs, loss of sponsors, unstable or declining government support, and burdensome permit requirements

threatening their long-term viability. The event sector has broadly warned of a province-wide “looming crisis” affecting arts, cultural, and community events;³

- **The Celebration of Light**, one of Vancouver’s largest and longest-running free public events, has been cancelled indefinitely due to rising production costs, loss of federal funding, major reductions in provincial support, and declining private-sector investment. Organizers reported that the festival is no longer financially sustainable without stable, long-term public funding;
 - **Vancouver Car Free Day** events across Main Street, Commercial Drive, and Denman Street were to be cancelled for 2026, with organizers citing rising operational costs, changes to grant funding, and uncertain financial support;
 - **The Vancouver International Jazz Festival** has publicly appealed for donations, citing a 41% budget decline since 2019, loss of major sponsors, and continued financial instability, challenging its ability to continue its free outdoor programming;
 - **Vancouver Pride** festival has reported financial strain and programming constraints after losing as much as half its corporate sponsorship in 2025 and faced with increasing cost pressures;⁴
 - **The African Descent Festival** was cancelled in 2025 after the Park Board withheld permits, citing unresolved financial issues from prior years. The major cultural event typically draws tens of thousands and plays an important role in celebrating Vancouver’s African diaspora;
 - **Khatsahlano**’s organizer referenced the shaky funding system affecting long-running free festivals, lamenting many Vancouver events get cancelled before their value is recognized, adding “Event organizers want the funding support before having to be rescued;”
 - In the last two years **Vancouver Mural Fest** shut down completely, while **Celtic Fest** was forced to drastically scale down its free event, both cited increased costs, loss of sponsorship and senior government funding;
4. Following direction from Council’s 2022 resolution “Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals and Events in Vancouver” the City of Vancouver has worked to reduce the financial and permitting burdens for festivals, yet costs including city-mandated security expenses continue to rise unsustainably;
 5. The City of Vancouver financially supports festivals and events through Arts and Culture Grants (administered through ACCS) and offsets to City costs (administered through ENG) amounting to cumulatively more than \$2m in

³ From street parties to fireworks: Why Vancouver’s festival scene is on shaky ground | Vancouver Sun, March 9, 2026 <https://vancouversun.com/news/why-vancouver-festival-scene-on-shaky-ground>

⁴ Vancouver Pride Parade still on despite losing nearly half its sponsors | Vancouver Sun July 10, 2025 <https://vancouversun.com/news/vancouver-pride-parade-loses-sponsors>

support annually. Accordingly, the City's Special Events Policy (ADMIN-031)⁵ outlines conditions for City support, the function of the Festival Expediting Staff Team (FEST), and the City's maximum contribution to Special Event Costs for Free Special Events (\$75,000);

6. Despite earlier interventions by the City of Vancouver to support free festivals with grants, offsets, and streamlined permitting, local event producers are struggling, and in recent weeks Council has stepped in with ad-hoc emergency funding to support a new fireworks festival (\$2m) and Car Free Day (\$30,000); and
7. Many Canadian cities have dedicated festival support funding programs including Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Burnaby, and Winnipeg. Of note, Toronto (Cultural Festivals Funding Program⁶) funds scores of festivals of varying sizes and scope;

When their local free annual community event the *Harmony Arts Festival* was faced with a financial strain the District of West Vancouver, repositioned itself as front-of-house producer, providing significant financial and logistical support, to ensure the festival could return.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to consult with stakeholders and festival organizers, and report back on the development of a City of Vancouver Festival Support Fund, designed to provide stable, transparent, multi-year financial support for qualifying cultural festivals, community celebrations, and major public events to insulate free festivals from rising cost pressures;

FURTHER THAT staff report back by Q3 2026 with Fund recommendations for Council's consideration and as a regularized budget line item that include:

- Funding sources and a sustainable budget model;
- A tiered funding structure recognizing festivals of varying scales and community impact;
- Transparent, criteria-based grants to cover last-mile city-related hard costs when a free festival can show community benefit and a realistic budget gap;
- Interim top-up grants (above the \$75,000 maximum) to *Special Event Costs for Free Special Events* for high-attendance events facing inflationary line items to prevent cancellation;

⁵ Special Events Policy | City of Vancouver
<https://policy.vancouver.ca/ADMIN031.pdf>

⁶ Cultural Festivals Funding Program | City of Toronto
<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/grants-incentives-rebates/arts-culture-grants/cultural-festivals-funding-program/>

- Options for matching-fund programs to leverage provincial and federal contributions;
 - Options that explore bridge-funding repayable loans; and
 - Mechanisms to ensure accountability, transparency, equity, and cultural inclusion.
- B. THAT The City advocate to the Province of British Columbia for the urgent restoration and stabilization of the B.C. Fairs, Festivals and Events Fund (BCFFE), given its significance to Vancouver’s event ecosystem, recent cancellations, and the warnings issued by dozens of major festivals province-wide.

amended

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Fry

That the following be added as Clause C:

- C. THAT Council request the Mayor, on behalf of Council, advocate to the Government of Canada, including through the Department of Canadian Heritage, for the restoration and expansion of federal funding programs supporting major festivals and cultural events, recognizing their significant economic, cultural, and tourism impacts, and the growing financial pressures facing such events in Vancouver and across Canada.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 11501)
(Councillor Dominato absent for the vote)

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During discussion on the amended motion, Chair Meiszner ceded the Chair to Vice-Chair Dominato to provide comments and resumed the Chair once finished.

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The amendment having carried, the motion as amended was put and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 11502).

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

WHEREAS

1. In Vancouver, community events and festivals help define the vibrancy of the city;

2. The City of Vancouver benefits significantly from the economic, social, cultural, and community-building impacts of festivals including economic activity, tourism, social cohesion, neighbourhood vibrancy, reconciliation, and cultural expression;
3. Vancouver's free festivals and cultural events are facing unprecedented financial strain, with long-standing events reporting rising costs, loss of sponsors, unstable or declining government support, and burdensome permit requirements threatening their long-term viability. The event sector has broadly warned of a province-wide "looming crisis" affecting arts, cultural, and community events;⁷
 - **The Celebration of Light**, one of Vancouver's largest and longest-running free public events, has been cancelled indefinitely due to rising production costs, loss of federal funding, major reductions in provincial support, and declining private-sector investment. Organizers reported that the festival is no longer financially sustainable without stable, long-term public funding;
 - **Vancouver Car Free Day** events across Main Street, Commercial Drive, and Denman Street were to be cancelled for 2026, with organizers citing rising operational costs, changes to grant funding, and uncertain financial support;
 - **The Vancouver International Jazz Festival** has publicly appealed for donations, citing a 41% budget decline since 2019, loss of major sponsors, and continued financial instability, challenging its ability to continue its free outdoor programming;
 - **Vancouver Pride** festival has reported financial strain and programming constraints after losing as much as half its corporate sponsorship in 2025 and faced with increasing cost pressures;⁸
 - **The African Descent Festival** was cancelled in 2025 after the Park Board withheld permits, citing unresolved financial issues from prior years. The major cultural event typically draws tens of thousands and plays an important role in celebrating Vancouver's African diaspora;
 - **Khatsahlano's** organizer referenced the shaky funding system affecting long-running free festivals, lamenting many Vancouver events get cancelled before their value is recognized, adding "Event organizers want the funding support before having to be rescued;"
 - In the last two years **Vancouver Mural Fest** shut down completely, while **Celtic Fest** was forced to drastically scale down its free event, both cited increased costs, loss of sponsorship and senior government funding;

⁷ From street parties to fireworks: Why Vancouver's festival scene is on shaky ground | Vancouver Sun, March 9, 2026 <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/why-vancouver-festival-scene-on-shaky-ground>

⁸ Vancouver Pride Parade still on despite losing nearly half its sponsors | Vancouver Sun July 10, 2025 <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/vancouver-pride-parade-loses-sponsors>

4. Following direction from Council's 2022 resolution "Making it Easier to Host Outdoor Festivals and Events in Vancouver" the City of Vancouver has worked to reduce the financial and permitting burdens for festivals, yet costs including city-mandated security expenses continue to rise unsustainably;
5. The City of Vancouver financially supports festivals and events through Arts and Culture Grants (administered through ACCS) and offsets to City costs (administered through ENG) amounting to cumulatively more than \$2m in support annually. Accordingly, the City's Special Events Policy (ADMIN-031)⁹ outlines conditions for City support, the function of the Festival Expediting Staff Team (FEST), and the City's maximum contribution to Special Event Costs for Free Special Events (\$75,000);
6. Despite earlier interventions by the City of Vancouver to support free festivals with grants, offsets, and streamlined permitting, local event producers are struggling, and in recent weeks Council has stepped in with ad-hoc emergency funding to support a new fireworks festival (\$2m) and Car Free Day (\$30,000); and
7. Many Canadian cities have dedicated festival support funding programs including Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Burnaby, and Winnipeg. Of note, Toronto (Cultural Festivals Funding Program¹⁰) funds scores of festivals of varying sizes and scope;

When their local free annual community event the *Harmony Arts Festival* was faced with a financial strain the District of West Vancouver, repositioned itself as front-of-house producer, providing significant financial and logistical support, to ensure the festival could return.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to consult with stakeholders and festival organizers, and report back on the development of a City of Vancouver Festival Support Fund, designed to provide stable, transparent, multi-year financial support for qualifying cultural festivals, community celebrations, and major public events to insulate free festivals from rising cost pressures;

FURTHER THAT Staff report back by Q3 2026 with Fund recommendations for Council's consideration and as a regularized budget line item that include:

- Funding sources and a sustainable budget model;
- A tiered funding structure recognizing festivals of varying scales and community impact;

⁹ Special Events Policy | City of Vancouver
<https://policy.vancouver.ca/ADMIN031.pdf>

¹⁰ Cultural Festivals Funding Program | City of Toronto
<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/grants-incentives-rebates/arts-culture-grants/cultural-festivals-funding-program/>

- Transparent, criteria-based grants to cover last-mile city-related hard costs when a free festival can show community benefit and a realistic budget gap;
 - Interim top-up grants (above the \$75,000 maximum) to Special Event Costs for Free Special Events for high-attendance events facing inflationary line items to prevent cancellation;
 - Options for matching-fund programs to leverage provincial and federal contributions;
 - Options that explore bridge-funding repayable loans; and
 - Mechanisms to ensure accountability, transparency, equity, and cultural inclusion.
- B. THAT The City advocate to the Province of British Columbia for the urgent restoration and stabilization of the B.C. Fairs, Festivals and Events Fund (BCFFE), given its significance to Vancouver’s event ecosystem, recent cancellations, and the warnings issued by dozens of major festivals province-wide.
- C. THAT Council request that the Mayor, on behalf of Council, advocate to the Government of Canada, including through the Department of Canadian Heritage, for the restoration and expansion of federal funding programs supporting major festivals and cultural events, recognizing their significant economic, cultural, and tourism impacts, and the growing financial pressures facing such events in Vancouver and across Canada.

5. Strengthening Vancouver’s FIFA World Cup 2026 Human Rights Action Plan with Measurable Standards, Reporting, and Monitoring

Councillor Fry introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from five speakers who spoke in support and one speaker who spoke in opposition of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Fry
SECONDED by Councillor Maloney

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver’s 57-page Draft Host City Human Rights Action Plan (Version 1, Feb. 19, 2026) acknowledges key human rights risks associated with hosting seven FIFA World Cup matches, including disproportionate impacts on unhoused people, people with disabilities, workers, racialized residents, and communities in the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown;

2. Several community organizations, including the BC Civil Liberties Association, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, and neighbourhood groups have raised significant concerns that the draft plan relies heavily on existing laws and policies rather than introducing new, specific, measurable, and funded protections and mitigations;
3. Some community advocates have suggested that the draft plan does not sufficiently prevent “Displacement of People Experiencing Homelessness and Housing Precarity” (1.6.1) during the tournament, which may increase health and potentially overdose risks by isolating people and separating them from health and support services. The plan acknowledges a dearth of daytime respite spaces;
4. The draft plan lacks clear metrics, targets, timelines, and independent monitoring mechanisms, relying instead on general statements of intent without accountability structures or performance indicators; and
5. Effective human rights protection requires ongoing, transparent reporting, community accessible complaint pathways, and independent monitoring systems, consistent with global best practice for megaevent human rights due diligence.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council request the Vancouver FIFA Host City Committee revise the draft Human Rights Action Plan to include a *Human Rights Measurement Framework* to address the identified gaps in specificity and monitoring with:
 - a. Clear, measurable indicators for each human rights domain (e.g., displacement prevention, accessibility, worker rights, policing impacts, freedom of assembly, public safety, unsheltered population wellbeing, harm reduction for substance-users);
 - b. Baseline data, targets, and expected outcomes for the pretournament, tournament, and post tournament periods; and
 - c. A Council reporting mechanism, using a standardized dashboard format.
- B. THAT Council request the Vancouver FIFA Host City Committee revise the draft Human Rights Action Plan to include specific protections for unhoused and precariously housed residents, including:
 - a. A No Displacement commitment: prohibiting dispersion, seizure of belongings, limited access to harm reduction services and sanctioned drinking or substance use areas, or other displacement practices during the World Cup in the absence of providing safe dignified alternatives;
 - b. Expanded low barrier day and night spaces, including respite centres, storage services, and hygiene facilities, in recognition that existing

- tenancy and shelter laws do not protect vulnerable unsheltered populations;
- c. Real time tracking reporting weekly data on shelter availability, displacement incidents, and service access barriers; and
 - d. A requirement that Vancouver Fire Rescue Services, Engineering, VPD, and Park Rangers document all interactions affecting unsheltered residents and provide them to public reporting.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to ensure there is a clear complaint and reporting mechanism through 311, and ensure a rapid review team (potentially including community organizations and advocates) to address urgent cases involving safety, discrimination, harmful enforcement practices or displacement, with a mandate to:
- a. Track human rights conditions before, during, and after the tournament;
 - b. Issue public-facing rapid response briefings during the tournament period; and
 - c. Report to Council with independent verification of human rights data.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Orr
SECONDED by Councillor Fry

THAT Council direct City staff, in partnership with the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee and other human rights stakeholders, to include in the final version of the Host City Human Rights Action Plan a requirement that, for the duration of the City's contracts for any advertising spaces it purchases within FIFA World Cup controlled access zones, an appropriate and impactful portion of those advertising spaces be dedicated to publicizing clear, accessible avenues for participants, personnel, and visitors to report, seek support for, and obtain remedy for human-rights-related impacts they may experience, consistent with the goals of the Vancouver Host City Human Rights Action Plan and FIFA's Human Rights Framework.

LOST (Vote No. 11503)
(Councillors Dominato, Klassen, Meiszner, Montague and Zhou opposed)
(Mayor Sim abstained from the vote)
(Councillor Kirby-Yung absent for the vote)

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At this point in the proceedings, Chair Meiszner ceded the chair to Vice-Chair Dominato to ask a question and provide comments, and resumed the Chair once finished.

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The amendment having lost, the motion was put and LOST (Vote No. 11504) with Councillors Dominato, Klassen, Meiszner, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed, and Councillor Kirby-Yung absent for the vote.

6. Establishing a City Comptroller By-law for Budget Efficiency and Asset Management Framework

Councillor Fry introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from one speaker who spoke in support of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Fry
SECONDED by Councillor Orr

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. The *Vancouver Charter* requires Council to appoint a Director of Finance, and authorizes Council to prescribe duties and establish administrative structures consistent with that governance framework;
2. The City's Auditor General (AG) is mandated through By-law and overseen via the Auditor General Committee (AGC) to conduct financial, compliance, and performance audits, and to administer the whistleblower program. The AG does not provide pre-award financial controls, continuous in-year oversight, or manage asset-management framework and assurance functions;
3. City of Vancouver high-budget departments such as Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Real Estate and Facilities Management, and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) represent significant portions of the City's annual operating and capital spending, including major infrastructure, fleet, technology, and facilities portfolios, requiring stronger front-end controls and cross-departmental accountability;
4. Recent Council-approved recommendation and reporting from the Auditor General "Audit of Recreation Facility Asset Management" confirms that Vancouver's asset management processes, including for major civic facilities, require structured oversight, systematic data quality, and lifecycle planning to ensure value-for-money, appropriate stewardship, and long-term reliability:¹¹

The City should implement an asset management framework.

Foundationally the framework should include:

An asset management policy to set guiding principles when using asset management practices to meet the requirements of the City's strategic

¹¹ City of Vancouver Office of the Auditor General | Audit of Recreation Facility Asset Management
<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2025-recreation-facility-asset-management-audit-report.pdf>

plans; and,

An asset management strategy to define how the City's strategic objectives translate to levels of service and other objectives, along with associated decision-making criteria, to guide the development of asset management plans;

5. The City of Vancouver Mayor's Budget Task Force (2024)¹² highlighted the City's \$500 million annual infrastructure funding deficit and called for optimizing the City's asset portfolio by implementing a robust Capital Asset Management Framework (CAMF) that could include: determining service levels and lifecycle costs; prioritizing capital projects; project execution and governance plans;
6. In Vancouver, independent oversight by the office of the Auditor General helps hold the City accountable by conducting financial, compliance, and performance audits to ensure proper stewardship of public funds and value for money in City operations, but they do not run or oversee daily financial operations or capital asset management;
7. A comptroller functions as an independent, day-to-day financial watchdog inside City Hall. Their job would be to continuously check the City's financial activity as it happens. Other municipal practice, such as the New York City Comptroller¹³, where the role also encompasses that of Vancouver's Auditor General, demonstrates that municipalities benefit from an independent officer responsible for fiscal oversight and asset management, as well as public reporting and performance auditing functions;
8. Municipal infrastructure governance best practice increasingly centralizes asset management oversight to ensure consistent policy, risk control, lifecycle costing, and transparent, comparable reporting across all asset classes. The FCM has documented that municipalities are formalizing asset management governance through cross-functional committees, and Council-facing accountability mechanisms as part of the Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP);
9. BC's Auditor General for Local Government (AGLG) guidance stresses that effective municipal asset management requires clear governance roles, adherence to policy and plans, ongoing oversight, and risk evaluation—all hallmarks of a comptroller function providing independent assurance and standardized reporting over asset decisions and across departments;
10. The City of Vancouver does not have a dedicated "Comptroller for Asset Management" (or equivalent). Asset-related responsibilities and reporting are distributed across divisions and funds (e.g., Engineering/Utilities, Real Estate via

¹² City of Vancouver | Mayor's Budget Task Force
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20240123/documents/r1.pdf>

¹³ Office of the New York City Comptroller Mark Levine
<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/>

the Property Endowment Fund and VAHEF), without a single, Council-facing independent assurance role;

11. Recent Engineering Services correspondence to Council (e.g., on public realm and streets investments) illustrates that operational asset activities are managed within line departments, reinforcing the need for a central oversight function that can independently assure consistency, risk controls, and long-term financial sustainability across the City's full asset portfolio; and
12. A Comptroller-style role in Vancouver could bring us in line with best practices, close oversight gaps, breakdown silos and duplication, and improve transparency and fiscal sustainability through independent review.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back on a draft Comptroller By-law to establish a City Comptroller as an independent oversight officer reporting directly to Council, with a mandate including:

- a. Monitoring departmental expenditures, including in Engineering, Parks and Recreation, REFM, and Policing providing corrective action oversight and breaking down departmental silos;
- b. Independent checks for compliance with Council-approved investment and debt policies;
- c. Developing a Citywide Asset-Management Framework, with the Comptroller to be responsible for its oversight, annual reporting, and integration into budget and capital planning cycles, including:
 - i. Citywide risk oversight;
 - ii. inventory integrity;
 - iii. asset condition assessment and criticality scoring;
 - iv. lifecycle costing and state-of-good-repair analysis;
 - v. alignment of departmental capital plans with long-term asset needs;
 - vi. annual public AMF report to Council, building on recent Auditor General findings on deficiencies in civic facility asset management, in order to compliment, not duplicate the AG's performance audits; and
 - vii. Exclusion of performance audits (reserved for the Auditor General);

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to work with the Auditor General Committee Chair and the Auditor General to prepare a Comptroller-AG Protocol ensuring:

- a. non-duplication;
- b. coordinated risk briefings; and

- c. information-sharing for audit planning (at AG discretion).

LOST (Vote No. 11505)

(Councillors Dominato, Kirby-Yung, Klassen, Meiszner, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed)

(Councillor Maloney abstained from the vote)

7. Funding Our Services with Taxes on Major Landholders and Investors

Councillor Orr introduced the motion.

The Committee heard from eleven speakers who spoke in support of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Orr

SECONDED by Councillor Fry

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. On November 25, 2025, Vancouver City Council approved the 2026 Operating and Capital Budget with a 0% property tax increase, following the passage of the “Zero Means Zero” motion on October 8, 2025;
2. While a 0% tax increase provides uniform relief, it does not distinguish between resident homeowners living in their only home and large-scale property holders, corporate landlords, investors, and speculators who hold significant property portfolios in Vancouver;
3. The City of Vancouver faces ongoing fiscal pressures including rising costs for public safety, infrastructure renewal, Metro Vancouver and E-Comm 9-1-1 levies, construction materials and labour, and collective agreements, and the 2026 Budget addressed these pressures through \$120 million in budget reductions and cutbacks rather than through revenue;
4. A blanket tax freeze benefits all property holders equally regardless of their stake in the community, providing proportionally greater relief to holders of the most valuable and numerous properties while doing nothing to address the structural mismatch between who bears the tax burden and who drives demand for city services;
5. According to BC Assessment, the assessed value of a typical single-family home in Vancouver declined approximately 5% for 2026, from \$2.205 million to \$2.092 million;
6. A targeted property tax rebate program for resident homeowners who own a single property and whose property is assessed below \$3 million would protect the majority of Vancouver homeowners from any net tax increase, while ensuring that large-scale property holders, non-resident owners, and high-value properties contribute their fair share to the services and infrastructure they benefit from;

7. The City of Vancouver operates under the *Vancouver Charter*, which does not currently provide explicit authority to administer a municipal property tax rebate program with eligibility criteria based on the number of properties owned by a taxpayer or their residency status;
8. The Municipalities Enabling and Validating Act (MEVA) is the established legislative mechanism through which the Province of British Columbia grants specific authorities to municipalities that fall outside their existing statutory powers, and has been used previously to authorize Vancouver-specific tax and housing programs including SRO vacancy control By-laws;
9. A targeted rebate program would align with the Province's stated goals of housing affordability, progressive taxation, and protection of resident homeowners, as reflected in the Province's existing Speculation and Vacancy Tax, Home Owner Grant, and Additional School Tax on properties valued above \$3 million; and
10. The current Council has both the mandate and the responsibility to establish a more equitable tax framework that does not simply defer necessary revenue shortfalls to future councils.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council endorse in principle the creation of a Fair Share Vancouver Property Tax Rebate Program, to be administered by the City, with the following parameters:
 - i. The rebate shall be available to natural persons who are resident homeowners occupying the property as their principal residence and who own no more than one property within the City of Vancouver;
 - ii. Eligible properties must have a 2026 assessed value, as determined by BC Assessment, of less than \$3,000,000;
 - iii. The maximum individual rebate shall be set at an amount equal to the increase in municipal property taxes payable on a property assessed at the 2026 median residential assessed value that is attributable to the tax rate increase referenced in clause B below; and
 - iv. The rebate program shall be funded from the additional revenue generated by the property tax increase referenced in clause B below.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to prepare an amendment to the 2026 property tax rating bylaw to implement a 7% increase to the City's general purposes residential property tax levy for the 2026 taxation year, with the understanding that eligible homeowners as defined in clause A shall receive a rebate equivalent to the increase attributable to the rate change, such that eligible resident homeowners experience no increase in municipal property taxes.
- C. THAT Council direct the Mayor, on behalf of Council, to write to the Premier of British Columbia, the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, and the Attorney

General requesting that the Province introduce an amendment to the Municipalities Enabling and Validating Act authorizing the City of Vancouver to:

- i. Establish and administer a property tax rebate program with eligibility criteria based on residency, principal residence occupancy, the number of properties owned by the taxpayer, and assessed property value;
- ii. Collect from property owners, or cross-reference with provincial data systems including BC Assessment records, Land Title and Survey Authority records, and Speculation and Vacancy Tax declarations, such information as is necessary to verify eligibility; and
- iii. Set differential effective tax rates for eligible and non-eligible residential property owners for the purposes of administering the rebate program.

D. THAT Council direct staff to report back within 30 days with:

- i. A detailed program design including eligibility verification procedures, administrative costs, and a revenue impact analysis;
- ii. An estimate of the number of properties and property owners eligible for the rebate under the proposed criteria;
- iii. An estimate of the net additional revenue to the City after all rebates are issued;
- iv. A legal analysis of the authorities required under the *Vancouver Charter* and any necessary MEVA amendments; and
- v. An assessment of the feasibility of implementing the program for the 2026 taxation year, or alternatively, a timeline for implementation in the 2027 taxation year.

REFERRAL MOVED by Councillor Fry
SECONDED by Councillor Maloney

THAT Council refer the motion “Funding Our Services with Taxes on Major Landholders and Investors” to staff, to report back before 2027 Budget considerations, with mechanisms to support in principle and practice a Fair Share Vancouver Property Tax Rebate Program, to be administered by the City and available to resident homeowners in addition to residential rental properties and small business within an equity centered framework and generally as outlined in the above-noted motion.

LOST (Vote No. 11506)
(Councillors Dominato, Kirby-Yung, Klassen, Meiszner, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed)
(Councillor Bligh absent from the vote)

The referral having lost, the motion was put and LOST (Vote No. 11507) with Councillors Dominato, Kirby-Yung, Klassen, Maloney, Meiszner, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed, and Councillor Fry abstaining from the vote, and Councillor Bligh absent for the vote.

The Committee adjourned at 4:33 pm.

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**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
STANDING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON
POLICY AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

APRIL 1, 2026

A meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 4:33 pm, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, following the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting, to consider the recommendations and actions of the Committee.

PRESENT: Mayor Ken Sim
Councillor Lisa Dominato
Councillor Pete Fry
Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung
Councillor Mike Klassen
Councillor Lucy Maloney
Councillor Peter Meiszner
Councillor Brian Montague
Councillor Sean Orr
Councillor Lenny Zhou

ABSENT: Councillor Rebecca Bligh

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Tina Penney, Deputy City Clerk
Julie Emmerson, Meeting Coordinator

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Council considered the report containing the recommendations and actions taken by the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities. Its items of business included:

Reports:

1. 2026 Animal Welfare Grant
2. 245 East Broadway Street – Vernon Block – Façade Grant
3. Housekeeping and Miscellaneous Updates to the Vancouver Building By-law and the Electrical By-law
4. Contract Award for the Provision of a Recreation Management System

Council Members' Motions:

1. Supporting the 2026 Vancouver Vaisakhi Parade and Festival
2. Fostering Inclusive and Diverse Democracy Through Harassment Prevention

3. Reversing the Costly Ban on Supportive Housing
4. Creating a City of Vancouver Festival Support Fund
5. Strengthening Vancouver's FIFA World Cup 2026 Human Rights Action Plan with Measurable Standards, Reporting, and Monitoring
6. Establishing a City Comptroller By-law for Budget Efficiency and Asset Management Framework
7. Funding Our Services with Taxes on Major Landholders and Investors

Reports 1 to 4 and Council Members' Motions 1 to 7.

MOVED by Councillor Montague
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the recommendations and actions taken by the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities at its meeting of April 1, 2026, as contained in Report 1 to 4, and Council Member's Motions 1 to 7, be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND REPORTS 1 AND 2, AND MOTION 1
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

URGENT BUSINESS

1. Restoring Lifeguard Services at Key Vancouver Beaches

MOVED by Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. Access to safe, supervised beaches is a core public service that supports recreation, public health, and community well-being for residents and visitors throughout the summer months;
2. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has historically provided seasonal lifeguard services at high-use locations including Spanish Banks East and West, Sunset Beach, and Third Beach;
3. These beaches are among the most heavily visited waterfront destinations in Vancouver and play a significant role in supporting tourism, local businesses, and outdoor activity;
4. It has been reported that the cost to restore seasonal lifeguard services at these locations is approximately \$600,000, representing a modest investment relative to the scale of public use and safety benefit;
5. Vancouver City Council has adopted a "Zero Means Zero" budget framework, which has been described as maintaining funding for core services; and
6. Seasonal lifeguard coverage is a frontline public safety service that aligns with the definition of a core service and is essential to ensuring safe access to Vancouver's beaches.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council direct staff to allocate up to \$600,000 within the 2026 operating budget, contingency, or appropriate reserves to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in order to restore seasonal lifeguard services at Spanish Banks East, Spanish Banks West, Sunset Beach, and Third Beach for the 2026 summer season.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to report back with implementation timelines and necessary approval to ensure lifeguard services are in place for the start of the 2026 beach season.

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Following a brief recess, under Section 9.6(b) of the Procedure By-law, the Mayor ruled that the motion does not qualify as urgent business as it will not impede any hiring deadlines. Accordingly, Section 9.4(d) applies at which time Councillor Kirby-Yung called notice on the motion, and the proposed motion will be brought forward at the next Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on April 22, 2026.

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ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Montague
SECONDED by Councillor Klassen

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council adjourned at 4:47 pm.

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