

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



BUSINESS PLAN 2025

Legislative Services and Communications
ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Legislative Services and Communications provides legislative, policy and administrative expertise and services to Council and City departments.

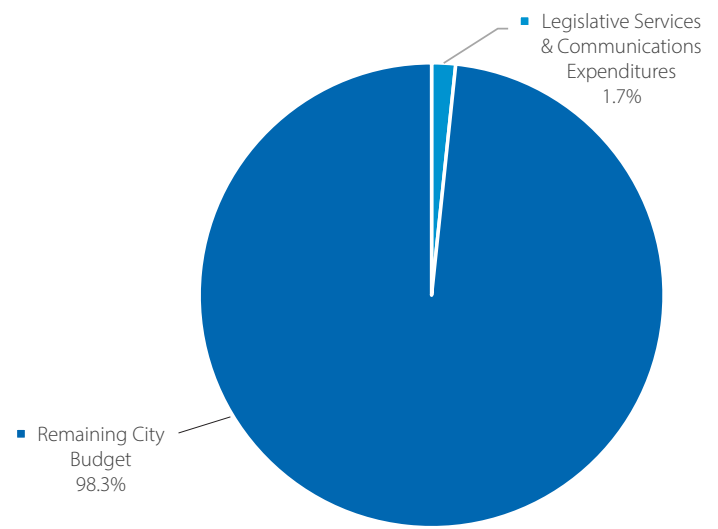
Legislative Services ensures the City conducts its business in compliance with provincial legislation and City bylaws. The department is responsible for running civic elections, alternative approval processes and referendums, and oversees the administration of Council and Committee meetings. In addition, it is responsible for records management services and public records access requests under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The Communications department supports Council-approved initiatives and ongoing City operations and programs. Communications issues news releases, manages the City's social media channels, supports public engagement activities and shares announcements with the public through digital, print and paid media channels.

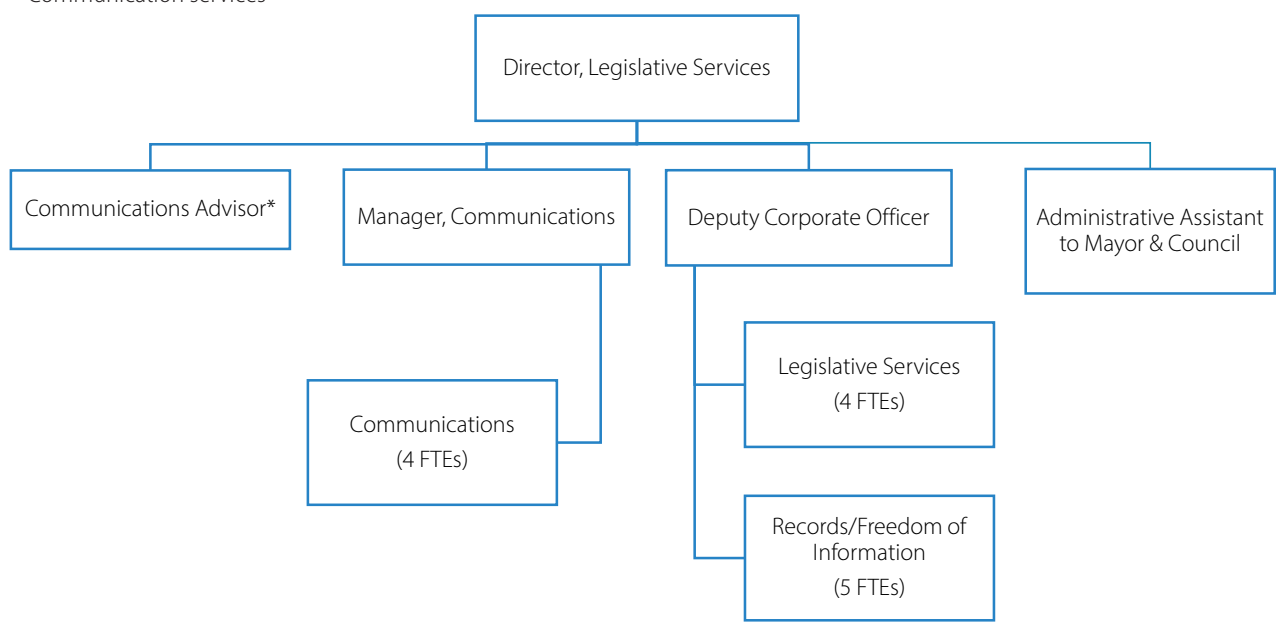
The core services are:

- Legislative services
- Communication services

Department's Share of the Budget



Operating Expenditure Budget: \$3,555,839



*Includes one position funded by CAO Office and reports to Legislative Services

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Legislative Services

The Director of Legislative Services is responsible for ensuring that Council conducts its meetings in compliance with all statutory requirements and that decisions made at Council meetings take into account all statutory prerequisites.

The Legislative Services department conducts local government elections, by-elections, alternative approval processes and referendums; acts as the official signatory for the City; conducts research for other City departments and Council; and maintains a registry of all bylaws and Council policies.

Additional responsibilities of the Legislative Services department include the following:

Legislative Support

The Legislative Support section oversees meeting logistics and documentation for all Council, Committee and Public Hearing meetings. The section coordinates meetings, prepares and distributes agendas, minutes and other meeting materials and tracks outstanding tasks resulting from Council and Committee resolutions, advertises and coordinates appointments to Council-appointed committees and provides other departments and the public with information regarding Council decisions and procedures. The Legislative Support team provides a primary communications link between City Council, staff and the community.

Records/Information and Privacy Support

The Records/Information and Privacy Support section coordinates and maintains the City's corporate Records Management Program and systems; retains all legal documents (e.g. contracts, agreements, leases, etc.); and accepts liability claims against the City of Nanaimo, maintaining claim files in coordination with the City's liability insurer, the Municipal Insurance Association of British Columbia.

The section is responsible for implementation and oversight of the City's Privacy Management Program, which includes ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, providing mandatory training to all staff on privacy matters, ensuring privacy impact assessments are completed for all new or updated City initiatives and reviewing and improving policies related to records management and privacy protection.

Communications

The Communications department promotes and supports Council-approved initiatives and ongoing City projects with internal, public and partner-focused information, engagement and outreach activities. This includes providing strategic advice and communications planning, reputational risk assessment and management and editorial and creative services. Communications provides information to the public through news releases, news conferences, virtual town halls, the City's public engagement platform, website and active social media channels.

Communications collaborates with all City departments to support public events and initiatives including event planning, marketing, campaign development and creative services including photography, graphic design, social media outreach, podcast and video production.

Staff provide proactive communication support on emerging issues, collaborate with City agencies and partners on key initiatives and prepare members of Council and subject matter experts for media interviews.

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Legislative Support

- Continued support for Council, committee meetings and Public Hearings.
- Meetings as of August 1, 2024: 26 Council/Public Hearings, 17 In Camera meetings, 27 Committee meetings.
- Bylaw/Policy Renewal Project - Updated/Amended the following Bylaws:
 - Political Signage Regulation Bylaw
 - Officer Designation and Delegation of Authority Bylaw
 - Various amendments to the Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw (including adding the Cowichan Valley Regional District into the Dispute Adjudication Registry System program and to apply fines associated with various regulatory bylaws)
 - Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaws to update RCMP services fees and implement electric vehicle fees and charges as well as to update parks, recreation and culture administrative fees
 - Assisted various departments with the following bylaws:
 - Electric Vehicle Recharging Bylaw
 - Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaws for Hotels, Motels, and the Downtown
 - Accommodation Tax Request Bylaw
 - Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw

Records, Information and Privacy Support

- Development and testing of official disposition/destruction processes in Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS).
- Completed implementation of the Mayor's Office electronic records transition to EDRMS and completed first ever official electronic destruction of 5275 files.
- Development and implementation of CCTV access audit procedures to ensure alignment with Council's Video Surveillance of Civic Property Policy.
- Coordinated staff participation in a pilot project with the Municipal Insurance Association of BC (MIABC) to complete a Best Practices Assessment with the goal of improving City-wide risk management practices.
- Ongoing updates to Privacy Impact Assessment procedures and templates to ensure the City is in line with current legislation and to improve privacy awareness and accountability.
- Ongoing rollout of mandatory virtual FOI, privacy and records training for all City Staff.
- Statistics (as of August 1, 2024):
 - 117 boxes of physical records securely destroyed
 - 47 active users in Laserfiche
 - 268 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received
 - 36 active claims, with 31 claims opened and 24 closed in 2024
 - 4 Privacy/Information Security Committee meetings held
 - 21 Privacy Impact Assessments opened and 17 completed in 2024

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Communications

- Provided strategic advice to senior management and Council on emerging matters, policy initiatives, projects and programming.
- Supported the City's government relations and advocacy activities.
- Collaborated with various departments on their public engagement needs.
- Filmed and produced videos to inform, educate, increase awareness, market services and make announcements.
- Received the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting for the 2022 Annual Report and the Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting for the 2022 Popular Annual Financial Report, produced by the Communications and Finance departments.
- Supported and enhanced Council-related information with the public by producing Council and Committee meeting summaries, a weekly e-newsletter (My Nanaimo This Week) and other media.
- Enhanced department's staff complement with the hiring of a Manager of Corporate Communications and Community Relations.
- Successful launch of The Sweet Layered Podcast, the official City of Nanaimo podcast.
- Promoted programs, events and initiatives for various departments such as: Midtown Water Supply project, various Provincial housing bills, BC Housing's HEART & HEARTH, Evolve E-bike program, Commercial Street upgrades, GoByBike weeks, Emergency Preparedness Week, Nanaimo 150, Public Works Week, Youth Resiliency Strategy, new Development Permit guidelines, Coast Salish Games, Downtown Transit Exchange, Downtown Story Map video series and the Cool-It Climate Change project.
- Managed the transition and creation of content for the Sitefinity website upgrade project.
- Updated the City's branding guidelines manual.
- Managed the launch of new online stores for City apparel and promotional items.
- Analytics and metrics (as of August 1, 2024):
 - Facebook Followers: 20,423
 - Twitter Followers: 16,300
 - Instagram Followers: 6,468
 - LinkedIn Followers: 4,846 (402 followers in last 90 days)
 - Media Requests: 247
 - Videos: 29
 - News Releases and Statements: 53
 - My Nanaimo This Week Newsletter: 32
 - Webmaster emails received, reviewed or responded to: 3265

2025 OPPORTUNITIES

Legislative Services

- Council, committee meetings and Public Hearings support.
- Ongoing eScribe improvements to increase efficiencies.
- If Council direction received, coordinate and host a referendum or alternative approval process related to the South End Community Centre and other large capital projects.
- Determine mechanisms for City Plan monitoring.
- Continue to modernize bylaws to ensure they align with Council's stated strategic goals, priorities and policy objectives.
- Continue providing staff education related to the Records Management Program, which will ensure compliance with records management policies and best practices.
- Ongoing implementation of the City's Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS).
- Ongoing implementation of mandatory virtual records, information and privacy training for all City Staff, and development of further training to complement the RM project and associated policies.
- Ongoing completion of Privacy Impact Assessments for all new projects and initiatives.
- Ongoing review and inventory of the City's Information Sharing Agreements.
- Ongoing implementation of auditing procedures that support the Records Management Program and Privacy Management Program.

Communications

- Improve accessibility for all website users by adopting plain language standards, using graphics to clarify and communicate non-verbally, ensuring alt-text is used for images and implementing other best practices.
- Assist in promoting and facilitating Town Halls and eTown Halls, providing more opportunities for the public to engage with Council.
- Provide strategic advice and practical support to Council on emerging matters, policy initiatives, advocacy activities, campaigns and intergovernmental relations.
- Maintain positive relationships with the media and seek opportunities to promote Nanaimo's strengths in local and external markets.
- Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop content for the City website relating to the Nation and land acknowledgement.
- Collaborate with and support departments to meet their analog and digital public engagement needs.
- Continue bi-weekly podcast episodes focusing on important topics or highlighting the people that work in the City of Nanaimo.
- Continue to participate in Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) training to stay updated on protocols and procedures.
- Review and update the City's Corporate Communications Plan and Crisis Communications Plan to reflect existing and emerging communication trends.

2025 KEY INITIATIVES - LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan



IAP Priority Action 118 – Continue to support the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness as required by the *Accessibility BC Act*.



IAP Priority Action 120 – Continue to explore and implement existing and emerging technologies to improve access to City services online, via phone, and in person for citizens with audio-visual accessibility needs.

Strategic Priority: Capital Projects

Support Capital Projects that require elector approval through either Alternative Approval Process or Referendum.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Work to improve accessibility for meetings and meeting materials.

Strategic Priority: Governance and Corporate Excellence

Continue to modernize bylaws to ensure they align with Council's stated strategic goals, priorities and policy objectives.

Ongoing implementation and maintenance of the City's Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS).

Ongoing implementation and maintenance of the City's Privacy Management Program and Records Management Program.

2025 KEY INITIATIVES - COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan



IAP Priority Action 111 – In partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation, continue to review and prioritize updates to/new – historical signage in areas of significance to Snuneymuxw First Nation.



IAP Priority Action 117 – Revise the internal style guide to standardize gender inclusivity and gender neutrality in municipal communications.



IAP Priority Action 119 – Work with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and other organizations to identify ways to create a welcoming inclusive atmosphere in the city, including city-owned facilities.



IAP Priority Action 187 – Create a coordinating visual brand and general narrative for Nanaimo in partnership with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Explore and implement emerging or innovative communications tools that will increase audience reach.

Coordinate with the IT department on a website refresh, updating the current software to meet cybersecurity requirements and identifying and implementing improvements to navigation and user experience.

Improve accessibility for all website users by adopting plain language standards, using graphics to clarify and communicate non-verbally, ensuring alt-text is used for images and implementing other best practices. Develop staff training to support these efforts.

Continue to use social media, online platforms and other tools such as the Emergency Call Alert System – called Voyent Alert! to share seasonal hazard information related to fire, heat waves, flooding, wind, storm or other seasonal events.

Enhance current public engagement processes and utilize standardized practices developed by the International Association of Public Participation.

