

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY



BUSINESS PLAN

2025

Planning and Development

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Planning and Development department is responsible for community planning, sustainability planning, business licensing, building permitting, subdivision, development permits, rezoning, as well as approval of development related engineering works, and environmental protection and tree management.

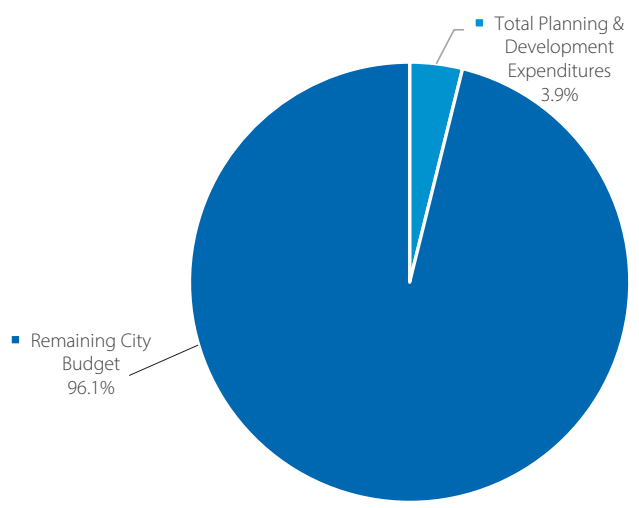
The department works with a wide range of external groups and City departments to develop and implement plans, programs, and projects to guide and manage the City's land use in a sustainable and integrated way, while also enhancing community, pride, wellbeing, livability, and equity.

Development approvals staff interact with many community and development industry stakeholders and City departments to build a well-designed, healthy and prosperous community.

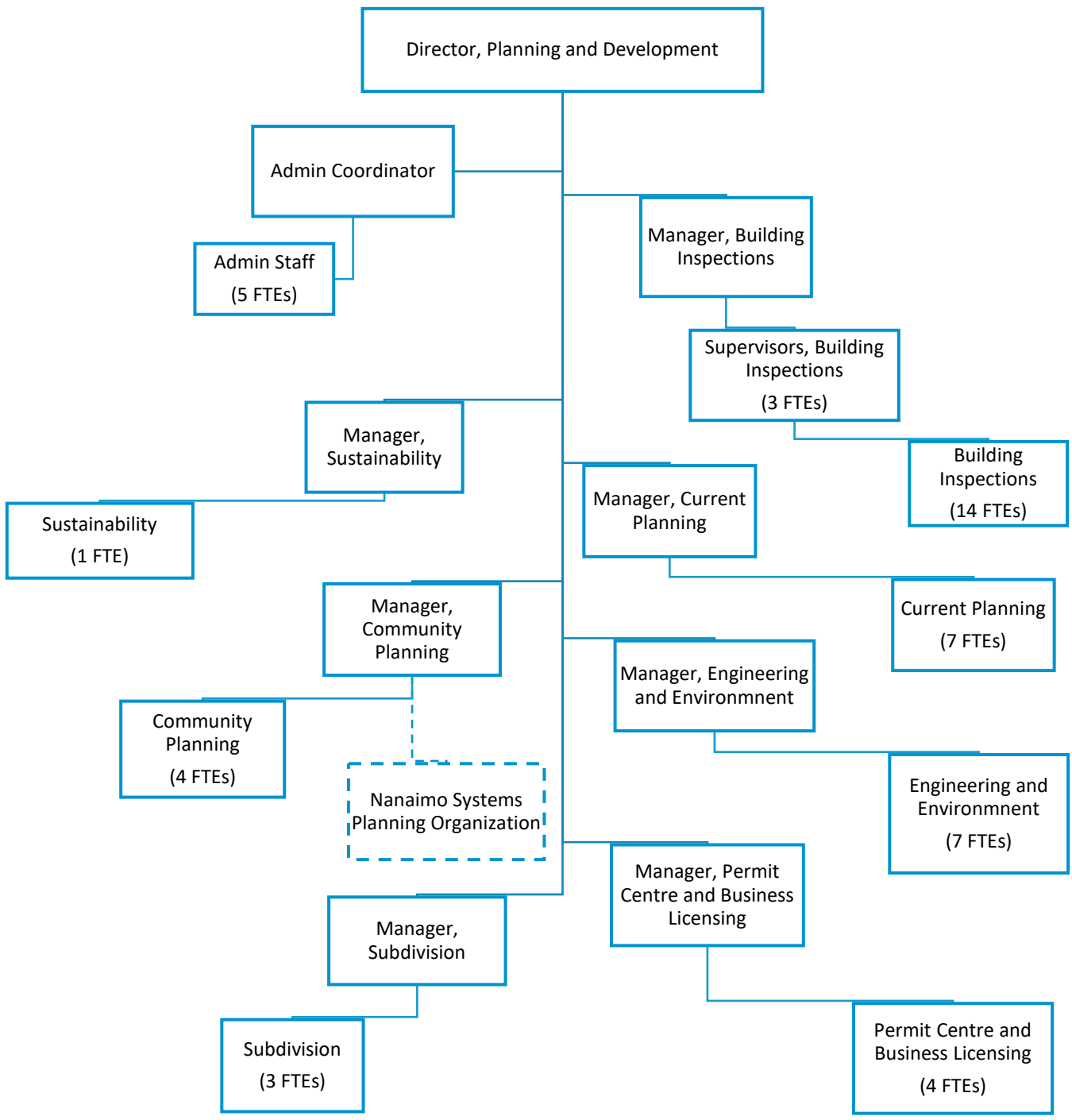
The Core Services are:

- Community Planning
- Sustainability
- Business Licensing & Permit Centre
- Current Planning
- Subdivision
- Development Engineering & Environmental Protection
- Building Inspections

Department's Share of the Budget



Operating Expenditure Budget: \$8,281,619



LEVEL OF SERVICE

Community Planning

- Implement the City's vision for future land use management, as outlined in City Plan, which serves as the City's Official Community Plan (OCP).
- Lead the creation of Area Plans to support the development of complete, connected, and sustainable Urban Centres as outlined in City Plan.
- Work with the Regional District of Nanaimo and member municipalities to support Regional Growth Management.
- Support engagement with neighbourhood associations as per Council policy.
- Anticipate and respond to growth management, including addressing strategic priorities regarding land use planning, affordable housing, heritage, and archaeological assessments.
- Provide professional advice, guidance, and support on community and long range planning matters to internal departments, community, business sector, and other interested organizations.

Sustainability

- Oversee community-wide energy management, climate action (mitigation) and adaptation (resiliency) and other environmental programs through the development and implementation of plans, programs, and other actions.
- Develop and administer climate action and environmental grants and rebate programs.
- Build and support community-wide education, awareness, and actions to address climate action and adaptation.
- Report regularly on corporate and community sustainability actions and progress.
- Lead the initial development of a monitoring strategy to track progress towards City Plan goals based on Nanaimo's Doughnut Economics sustainability framework (the responsibility for ongoing maintenance is to be determined).

- Develop and implement plans to increase awareness of, and participation in, various energy conservation and demand side management programs, focusing on residential and commercial sectors
- Provide professional advice, guidance, and direction on sustainability and environmental issues to internal departments, community, business sector, and other interested organizations.

Business Licensing & Permit Centre

- Responsible for the administration of 7,100 business licences, including, home-based, commercial, non-profit, non-resident, food vending and short-term rental. In addition to the licences issued for businesses that operate locally, 1,028 licences were issued under the Inter-Community Business Licence Bylaw which allows mobile businesses, such as trades, the ability to operate in participating municipalities without the need to obtain separate business licences in each municipality.
- Works regularly and collaboratively with community partners (VIHA, Community Care, RCMP, etc.) and internal departments (Current Planning, Fire Rescue, Recreation and Culture, Parks) to ensure that businesses are compliant with municipal and provincial regulations.
- The Permit Centre provides frontline support and offers walk-in customers an one-stop-shop experience with staff representatives from Current Planning, Engineering and Environment, and Bylaw Services sections. Enquiries related to other departmental sections not represented in the Permit Centre are fulfilled on an as-needed basis by staff from the other sections.
- Permit Centre clerks provide assistance and support to the Building Inspections section by processing applications received for residential building permits through the online portal and to customers by troubleshooting online permitting software issues and accepting payments for permit fees.

Current Planning

- Respond to public inquiries and information requests
- Administer development related bylaws including the Zoning Bylaw, Parking Bylaw, and Sign Bylaw
- Ensure new development adheres to applicable Development Permit Area Guidelines
- Process development-related applications including Official Community Plan amendments, rezonings, temporary use permits, sign, permits, covenant amendments, development permits and development variance permits
- Bring forward appeals to the Board of Variance
- Reviews applications from external agencies related to liquor and cannabis licences, telecommunications facilities, and development within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)
- Review business license applications for compliance with the Zoning Bylaw and applicable land use regulations
- Committees: Design Advisory Panel, Board of Variance

Development Engineering & Environmental Protection

- Administer the Development Cost Charge Bylaw
- Review and coordinate development-driven engineering works
- Process works-in-city-streets permits, fill permits
- Administer and enforce the Tree Protection Bylaw
- Maintain statistics for the value of civil works constructed through development
- Develop environmental protection policies for the City

Subdivision

- Administer the Subdivision Control Bylaw.
- Review subdivision applications for compliance with Federal and Provincial statutes and regulations and municipal bylaws.



- Process development permit, development variance permit, and minor rezoning applications required for subdivision approval.
- Administer applications for subdivision approval under the Land Title Act, Strata Property Act and Local Government Act.

Building Inspections

- Administer Building Regulations within Nanaimo through the Building Bylaw, the BC Building Code, and other regulations
- Process applications for building permits
- Perform building permit-related inspections
- Conduct complaint-driven building violation inspections
- Conduct over 13,000 inspections each year

2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Community Planning

- Worked with Current Planning to complete the affordable housing projects related to Increasing Housing Options; Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing; and, Transit Oriented Areas.
- Completed public consultation to create new Form and Character Development Permit Guidelines for multi-family, commercial, industrial and mixed use development.
- Reported to neighbourhood associations on the progress of their 2023 priority requests, and facilitated the second annual Neighbourhood Association Engagement event to learn the priority requests of neighbourhoods.
- In cooperation with other departments, commenced the project to create a Woodgrove Urban Centre complete community assessment to support a future Area Plan.
- Met with BC Housing regularly to advance commitments and development investments for non-market housing including supportive units, shelters, complex care, navigation centre and social housing.
- Completed a review of the short-term rental program to support increasing the long-term rental housing stock.
- Supported the Finance Department's project to create non-market housing tax exemption options and made progress towards building a database of non-market housing units.
- Continued implementation of the Heritage Program by facilitating the issuance of Heritage Façade Grants and a Heritage Home Grant.
- Commenced the project to create a new Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw as introduced in Provincial Bill 46.
- Initiated the project to create a 2024 Housing Needs Report as required by Provincial Bill 44.
- Provided support to the Systems Planning Organization in cooperation with Social Planning.

Sustainability

- Completed the Financing Deep Energy Home Retrofit Feasibility Study.
- Proposed a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) style home energy financing pilot program and submitted a funding application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
- Collaborated with departments across the organization to complete the draft City Plan Monitoring Strategy.
- Commenced work with the IT department to develop a public-facing webpage for City Plan monitoring indicators.
- Completed an e-mobility technical study to assess current electric vehicle and e-bike adoption, impact of forecasted adoption scenarios and potential roles of the City.
- Sponsored Cool It! Climate Leadership Training Program to work with nine elementary classes and seven high school classes during the spring semester, reaching 387 students and completing 2,566 actions.
- Developed a carbon calculator as an educational tool for individual Nanaimo residents to have a better understanding of their carbon footprints.
- Began to work with the Regional District of Nanaimo on Mobile Home Park Energy Conservation and Emissions Reduction Strategy with funding support from BC Hydro.
- Continued to provide rebates for Home Energy Assessment, EV Charging Infrastructure and Woodstove Exchange Programs and provided additional funding to support Home Energy Navigator Program for Nanaimo residents
- Supported seven community-led initiatives through Community Environmental Sustainability Project Grant
- Began to work with Engineering, Emergency Management and Development Engineering and Environment Protection to develop the scope for Sea Level Rise Management Plan

Development Activity

Development activity in Nanaimo in 2024 remains strong despite economic challenges of inflation and rising interest rates in 2023. Significant zoning amendment applications under review in 2024 include two supportive housing MOU sites, Te'tuxwtun, and Bowers District, with the Sandstone zoning amendment adopted early in 2024. Building permits were issued for over \$146M in total construction value achieved by the end of August 2024. This includes building permits for 384 new residential units, with 914 units projected by the end of 2024.

Provincial Legislative Changes Implemented

Staff reviewed and updated relevant land use bylaws to comply with provincial legislative changes to support Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (Bill 44), Transit-Oriented Areas (Bill 47) and Short-Term Rental Regulations (Bill 35) with the intent to support growth in the housing availability.

Business Licensing and Permit Centre

Short-term Rentals

Licensing short-term rentals was initiated in April 2022, however, with the recent introduction of provincial legislation pertaining to short-term rental operation, Business Licensing experienced a surge of short-term rental applications prior to the Province's May 1, 2024 deadline. To date, 626 applications have been received and currently, there are 472 active licences.

New provincial tools, such as the short-term rental portal, allows better regulations of short-term rentals and is effective in identifying short-term rental operators who do not have a business licence. As the province expands on the initiatives to ensure the primary residency requirement, identifying non-compliant operators will become easier. Business Licensing continues to work with the Province in user testing new short-term rental portal improvements and data sharing initiatives.

Mobile Food Vending Review

Business Licensing and Parks, Recreation and Culture have engaged a consultant to review the current mobile food vending model and designated locations and to make recommendations on how to enhance the program and ways to introduce more vending locations in City parks and streets.



Current Planning

Zoning Bylaw Update

Staff will initiate a review of Zoning Bylaw 4500 in the Fall of 2024 to continue throughout 2025. This review will include alignment of zoning to support the land use policies and objectives of City Plan as well as other Council priorities such as supporting affordable housing.

Development Procedures & Notification Bylaw Update

The Development Approval Procedures and Notification Bylaw, which was adopted in 1991, was reviewed by a consultant and a new and updated bylaw was presented and adopted by Council in April 2024. This update focused on clarity, accurate references to legislation and reflect the priorities of the community.

Planning Function Review

The City engaged Neilson Strategies Inc. to undertake a Development Approvals Process Review in 2023/2024 focused on planning approvals and processes. The purpose of the review was to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the development approvals process with the overall goal to enhance customer experience and reduce approval timelines. The final report included a legislative and municipal best practices review, internal interviews, internal process audit and interviews with external customers and industry representatives. The review was completed and endorsed by Council in July 2024.

Building Inspections

Certified Professional Program

In December 2023, Council adopted a Bylaw and the City became one of a growing number of municipalities offering the Certified Professional Program as an additional stream of permitting for the construction of complex buildings. The City received its first application from Vancouver Island University for a new student housing project and is currently processing a phased permit for the foundation and first three storeys of the proposed 10-storey project.

Building Permit Function Review Implementation – Continuation

The City of Nanaimo, in conjunction with the Joint Building Permit Advisory Working Group (JBPAWG) developed the Building Code Analysis Form along with its supplemental guide. This initiative, which went live in March 2024, offers several benefits to streamline the building permit application process for commercial permits.

It provides a structured system for including building code-related data for drawings submitted with building permit applications. The form is required for new and existing commercial, industrial, multi-family buildings, ensuring all building code items relevant to each project are considered. The accompanying guide is available to assist in completing the analysis, which helps in ensuring that the design complies with all aspects of the BC Building Code. It includes a checklist representing a minimum list of code items to be reviewed and addressed, which helps in submitting a complete application.

The form acts as a value-add checklist for the architect and consultant team to ensure a complete package, minimizing the time required to complete the permit application. Overall, the form aids in expediting the permit process while ensuring compliance with the necessary safety and construction standards.

Subdivision

Geotechnical Guidelines

Two sets of Guidelines related to geotechnical reporting were endorsed by Council in 2024.

The City's Guidelines for the completion of geotechnical reports were updated from the previous version. This new document provides guidance for geotechnical reporting documents

prepared for development applications, including rezonings, development permits, development variance permits and building permits.

Following the creation of a new Abandoned Coal Mine Development Permit Area in City Plan in 2022, the new Guidelines for Geotechnical Assessments Above Abandoned Mine Workings were developed. This document provides a consolidation of mining-related information, a preliminary desktop risk assessment which classifies areas as high, medium, or low risk, and an overview of what information the City would expect to see in any report related to assessments above abandoned mine workings.

Subdivision Control Bylaw Update

The City's Subdivision Control Bylaw is in need of a larger update to ensure that it is clear on the City's requirements for subdivision approval and reflects current legislative requirements and best practices. With the recent update to Schedule A of the Bylaw (MOESS), as well as new direction provided by City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined, there is need for an overall update to the bylaw.

Bylaw review has continued into 2024, with a new bylaw currently in draft form. However, progression of the new bylaw has been put on hold following legislation changes introduced by the province through the Housing Statutes Amendment Act, 2024 (Bill 16), including expanded works and services authorities. Bill 16 received Royal Assent on 2024-APR-25 but further guidance from the province is not expected to be provided until the Fall of 2024. As staff expect additional regulations related to Bill 16 will need to be incorporated into the Subdivision Control Bylaw, progression of the Bylaw is being held until more information from the Province is made available.

Development Engineering and Environmental Protection

Tree Voucher Program

A tree planting rebate program was established in 2017 to help increase the overall forest canopy on private lands. Funding comes from deferred revenue from fines, cash-in-lieu payments for loss of significant trees, as well as revenue received during the subdivision process as cash-in-lieu payment for tree replacement planting requirements. The program is increasingly popular and contributed to the planting of approximately 5,700 trees on private land from 2017 through 2023. Applications for a total of 1,144 vouchers were received by the end of August 2024.

2025 OPPORTUNITIES

Community Planning

City Plan Review

As required by Provincial Bill 44, review and update City Plan to be in compliance with the 2024 Housing Needs Report, Transit Oriented Area regulation, and other housekeeping matters.

Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonus for Affordable Housing

Review new tools introduced in Provincial Bill 16 to consider “Inclusionary Zoning”, and to update the City’s current “Density Bonus” zoning scheme for affordable housing. The consideration of “Inclusionary Zoning” and update to “Density Bonus” scheme will be completed along with the priority action project to analyze the Urban Centre and Corridor land use designations in City Plan with the objective of pre-zoning appropriate parcels for affordable housing.

Tenant Protections

Complete a project to provide protections for tenants impacted by redevelopment and displacement. Consider the use of new tools introduced in Provincial Bill 16 for a tenant protection bylaw.

Sustainability

City Plan Monitoring and Engagement

Continue to work on the development of remaining indicators and data collection with stakeholders and subject matter experts and support public communication and community engagement efforts.

Home Retrofit Financing Program

Once program funding is secured, launch the Home Retrofit Financing Program to support homeowners who undertake measures to reduce emissions, incorporate cooling, mitigate the impact of power outage and improve occupants’ health.

Sea Level Rise Management Plan

Initiate a project to develop a sea level rise management plan.

Staffing

Colliding factors, including a new BC Building Code, Provincial legislative changes, and Step Code changes combined to create additional challenges for Development Approvals in 2024. The City of Nanaimo is currently experiencing a multi-year development boom, with 2024 being another strong year for construction. The sustained pace of development has been coupled with an increase in the complexity of files and challenges filling key technical positions. Retaining qualified and experienced staff as well as expanding capacity for staffing is essential moving forward.

Planning Function Review Implementation

Implementing the recommendations of the Planning Function Review, which was completed in 2024, will be a key focus for Planning and Development going forward.

Permitting and Approval System Improvements

Scope: Replace, upgrade, existing legacy software tools to increase permit issuance efficiencies and efficacies.

Development Engineering & Environmental Protection

Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw Update: The City’s Tree Bylaw was adopted in 2013. At that time the bylaw represented a significant step forward in the management and protection of trees within the City. However, through the administration of the bylaw over the past eight years it has become apparent that revisions are required to reflect current industry practices, allow for improved administration of the bylaw and address gaps in the bylaw to ensure the bylaw provides for improved management and protection of trees within the City. A phased approach to this project is proposed with an administrative update as Phase 1 and Phase 2 being a substantial update to ensure alignment with City Plan objectives concurrent with or following the update of the Urban Forest Strategy.

New Assets from Development

Year	Total Value of New Civil Infrastructure Accepted (in Millions)
2019	\$8.7
2020	\$12.4
2021	\$4.5
2022	\$5.0
2023	\$9.4
2024 projection	\$8-\$11

New Detached Lots

Year	Number of New Lots
2019	147
2020	215
2021	219
2022	23
2023	88
2024 projection	50

All Dwelling Units

Year	Dwelling Units
2019	1,877
2020	1,084
2021	674
2022	1,370
2023	1,170
2024 projection	914

Total Construction Value

Year	Value (in Millions)
2019	\$445
2020	\$243
2021	\$271
2022	\$410
2023	\$365
2024 projection	\$275



2025 KEY INITIATIVES

Strategic Priority: Implementing City Plan



IAP Priority Action #7 – Develop a program to encourage the adoption of e-bikes with equity considerations



IAP Priority Action #16 – Update the Urban Tree Canopy Management Strategy, conduct a tree canopy assessment, and update tree protection bylaws and development guidelines to bring urban tree management into alignment with City Plan objectives.



IAP Priority Action #22 – Continue the City's Water Saving Rebate Programs to reduce water consumption.



IAP Priority Action #69 - Complete an analysis of Urban Centre and Corridor land use designations with the objective of pre-zoning appropriate parcels for affordable housing.



IAP Priority Action #71 – Consider new authority in the *Local Government Act* to not require Public Hearings for rezonings. Included an update to the Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw and the Council Procedure Bylaw.



IAP Priority Action #73 - Create a tenant relocation policy to support tenants impacted by redevelopment and displacement.



IAP Priority Action #196 - Prepare an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre that provides detailed land use, policy guidance, infrastructure planning, and amenity needs.



IAP Priority Action #198 – Implement the Neighbourhood Associations Supports Policy.



IAP Priority Action #202 – Update the Development Permit Area guidelines to be consistent with City Plan policies, with specific focus on:

- General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; and,
- Steep Slope Development Permit Area Guidelines



IAP – C1.1.3- Require and incentive buildings to implement the BC Energy Step Code (rezoning policy and other tools).



IAP – C1.1.6- Explore and assess options for establishing a financial program for home energy upgrades for both City residents and RDN.



IAP – C3.2.2 - Annually report to Council on the affordable housing progress action items and targets.



IAP – C3.2.8 – Continue to implement the existing BC Housing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide affordable and supportive housing and proceed with updating the MOU to reflect evolving community needs.



IAP – C4.6.2 – Maintain the Heritage Conservation Program, which includes maintaining a Heritage Register, and considering archaeology and heritage in the development approval process.



IAP – C4.6.3 - Continue to offer the Heritage Building Tax Exemption Grant, the Heritage Façade Grant, and the Heritage Home Grant.

Strategic Priority: Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges

Planning and Development staff provide support the Systems Planning Organization (SPO) as they implement the Health and Housing Action Plan to improve the lives of Nanaimo's most vulnerable citizens.

Strategic Priority: Communicating with the Community

Holding annual engagements to define the collective priorities of the neighbourhood associations and confirming with the associations their 2025 priority requests.

Strategic Priority: Governance and Corporate Excellence

City Plan and the Zoning Bylaw Update to take place in 2025. This process will include public consultation and alignment with provincial legislative requirements.

PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

	2024 Approved Budget	2025 Draft Budget	2026 Draft Budget	2027 Draft Budget	2028 Draft Budget	2029 Draft Budget
Revenues						
Planning & Development Administration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Building Inspections	2,546,500	2,500,500	2,525,505	2,550,760	2,576,267	2,602,029
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	1,228,500	1,305,000	1,318,050	1,331,230	1,344,542	1,357,987
Community Planning	1,500	1,500	1,515	1,530	1,545	1,560
Current Planning	80,200	66,000	66,660	67,327	68,000	68,680
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	42,500	20,500	20,705	20,912	21,121	21,332
Subdivision	73,000	52,000	52,520	53,045	53,576	54,112
Sustainability	50,000	50,000	-	-	-	-
System Planning Organization	-	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Operating Revenues	\$ 4,022,200	\$ 3,995,500	\$ 3,984,955	\$ 4,024,804	\$ 4,065,051	\$ 4,105,700
Expenditures						
Planning & Development Administration	\$ 1,015,539	\$ 936,041	\$ 959,778	\$ 980,140	\$ 997,921	\$ 1,022,142
Building Inspections	2,473,557	2,456,062	2,519,988	2,574,822	2,629,193	2,688,921
Business Licensing & Permit Centre	601,189	595,051	610,495	623,499	634,678	650,361
Community Planning	694,708	741,554	760,202	775,733	789,173	807,877
Current Planning	1,075,557	1,097,471	1,126,132	1,150,638	1,171,907	1,201,174
Development Engineering & Environmental Protection	1,060,361	1,113,983	1,136,967	1,161,387	1,184,447	1,212,202
Subdivision	511,194	529,199	543,067	554,862	565,005	579,206
Sustainability	370,475	332,258	340,917	348,308	354,690	363,718
System Planning Organization	951,737	480,000	480,000	8,263	-	-
Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 8,754,317	\$ 8,281,619	\$ 8,477,546	\$ 8,177,652	\$ 8,327,014	\$ 8,525,601
Net Annual Operating Expenditures	\$ 4,732,117	\$ 4,286,119	\$ 4,492,591	\$ 4,152,848	\$ 4,261,963	\$ 4,419,901
Staffing (FTEs) - Budgeted*	58.0	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0	57.0