

# Local Government 101



City Government  
and How Decisions  
are Made

# Before We Begin...

Let's start by learning about the three levels of government in Canada



# Canada Has 3 Levels of Government

1. Federal
2. Provincial
3. Municipal (city)



# Canada's Parliamentary Democracy

## Canada's Parliament has three parts:

- The Sovereign (Queen or King)
- The Senate
- The House of Commons

## Canadian citizens elect political representatives at all three levels of government:

- Federal
- Provincial or territorial
- Municipal

# Canada's Parliamentary Democracy

## Elected representatives hold positions in:

- The federal House of Commons
- Provincial and territorial legislatures
- City councils

## Their duties include:

- Passing laws
- Approving and monitoring spending
- Keeping the government accountable

# Federal Government

The **Prime Minister** heads the federal government based in Ottawa. It deals with **national and international matters**, such as:

- National security
- Defence
- Military
- Citizenship & Immigration
- Money
- Banking
- International Relations
- Employment Insurance

# Provincial & Territorial Governments

A **Premier** leads each province and territory. The provincial and territorial governments have the power to **change their laws and manage their own public lands**. They are in charge of things such as:

- Education
- Health care
- Highways
- Provincial taxes
- Some natural resources

# Municipal Governments

**Mayors** or **Reeves** lead municipal governments. Municipal governments **run cities, towns or districts** (municipalities). They are in charge of things such as:

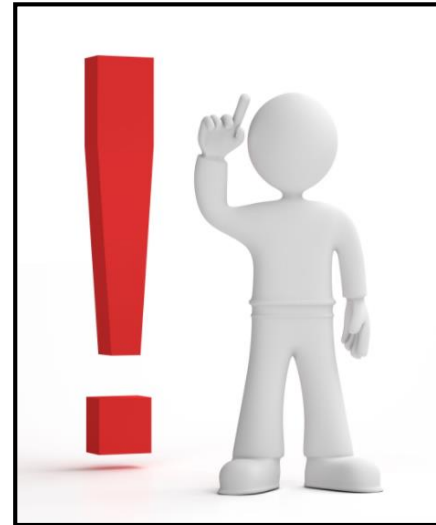
- Libraries
- Roadways
- Local police
- Local land use (e.g. planning, zoning)
- Fire protection
- Parks and recreation
- Public transportation
- Water and sewer
- Waste management



# But Keep In Mind...

In some cases there are overlaps and shared responsibilities between levels of government.

- Roads
- Laws
- Police
- Environment
- Parks
- Tourism
- Any many more!



# Indigenous Self-Government

Indigenous self-government is the formal structure through which Indigenous communities may control the administration of their **people, land, resources and related programs and policies**, through agreements with federal and provincial governments.

# First Nations or Indigenous Governance

Across the country, **band councils** govern First Nations communities. Band councils are **similar to municipal governments**. Band members **elect the band council, which makes decisions that affect their local community**.

# Before We Move On, Let's Review!

To review how the three levels of government in Canada work, watch the following video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7C8uDuhLqvg>



# What Happens in BC?



# Local Governments in BC

- **Legislation** empowers, guides, limits and affects BC's local governments.
- The **Community Charter** and the **Local Government Act** define the core authority of local governments and guide decision-making.
- The City of Vancouver is served by its own legislation, the **Vancouver Charter**.

# What Happens in Vancouver?



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# The Vancouver Charter

- The City of Vancouver, including the Vancouver Park Board, is regulated under the **Vancouver Charter**, a provincial statute.
- The Charter contains the rules that govern how the City operates, what bylaws City Council can create, and how budgets are set.
- Other provincial legislation, such as the BC Police Act, determine the responsibilities of other City boards and commissions.



# What the City of Vancouver Does

To find out more about what the City of Vancouver does watch the following 90 second video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaQyyUymZy4>

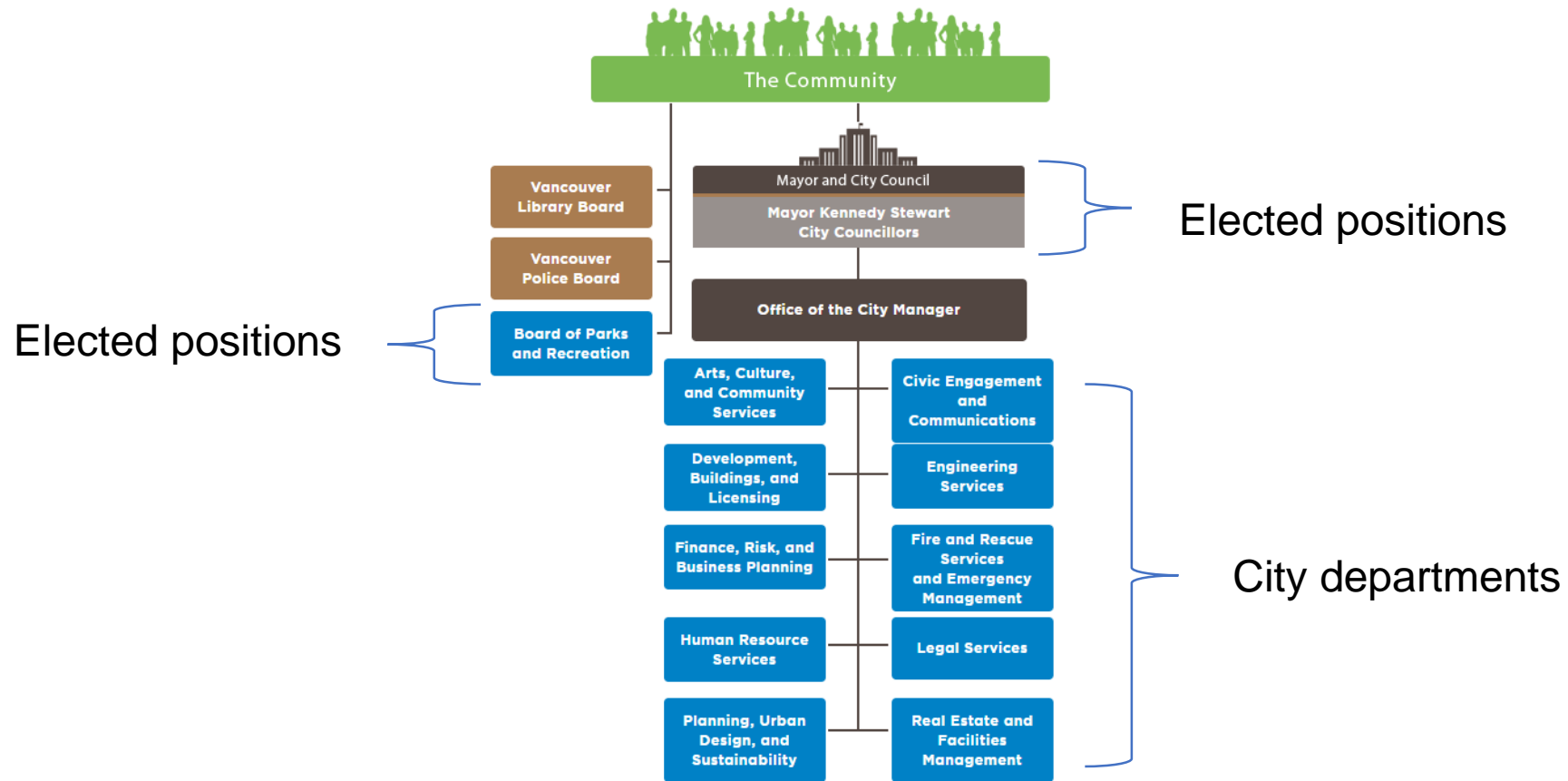


# What the City of Vancouver Does

This means that the City of Vancouver is responsible for a lot more than you might think! This includes:

- Bike lanes
- Street food
- Public Bathrooms
- Graffiti Removal
- Animal Control and pet licences
- Streets and street lights
- Street Use Permits (block parties, festivals)
- Civic Theatres (Orpheum, Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Playhouse)
- Sign Maintenance
- The PNE
- Supporting community organizations that serve the social needs of Vancouverites (Neighbourhood Houses, etc.)
- Business licenses
- Parking spaces, permits
- Vancouver Aquarium, Vancouver Museum, HR McMillan Space Centre

# The City of Vancouver's Structure



# Electing a Mayor & Councillors

- In Vancouver, the Mayor and councillors are elected “at large.”
- This means that they represent the entire municipality.
- In an election, voters choose among all candidates who are running in the election.
- In Vancouver there is 1 Mayor position and 10 councillor positions. Each voter gets 1 vote for Mayor and 10 votes for councillors
- The candidates with the highest number of votes win the election and become the new Mayor and councillors
- In addition to city councillors, voters also elect 9 School Board Trustees and 7 Park Board Commissioners

# Mayor & Councillors

**City Council is made up of the Mayor and 10 Councillors who are elected at large for a four-year term. The Mayor is the Chair of City Council. The City of Vancouver is governed by the Vancouver Charter and has the power to:**

- Pass bylaws regulating such things as businesses, building, noise, and land use
- Buy and sell property
- Collect property taxes and other taxes
- Approve major spending for all parts of the City government
- Take on debt
- Allocate funds for special activities, such as arts and community services
- Set up departments and offices for City services
- Hire staff for City departments and offices

# Mayor Kennedy Stewart, 2018-2022



# City Councillors, 2018-2022



[Rebecca Bligh](#)



[Christine Boyle](#)



[Adriane Carr](#)



[Melissa De Genova](#)



[Lisa Dominato](#)



[Pete Fry](#)



[Colleen Hardwick](#)



[Sarah Kirby-Yung](#)



[Jean Swanson](#)



[Michael Wiebe](#)

# Park Board Commissioners, 2018-2022



[Tricia Barker](#)



[John Coupar](#)



[Dave Demers](#)



[Camil Dumont](#)



[Gwen Giesbrecht](#)



[John Irwin](#)



[Stuart Mackinnon](#)

- The **Park Board** is made up of **seven commissioners**, who are elected at large for a four-year term.
- The commissioners set the vision and policy that guides the Park Board's services and programs.
- The Board listens to residents and acts as their voice to ensure that Vancouver parks and recreation remain accessible and sustainable.



# City Budget

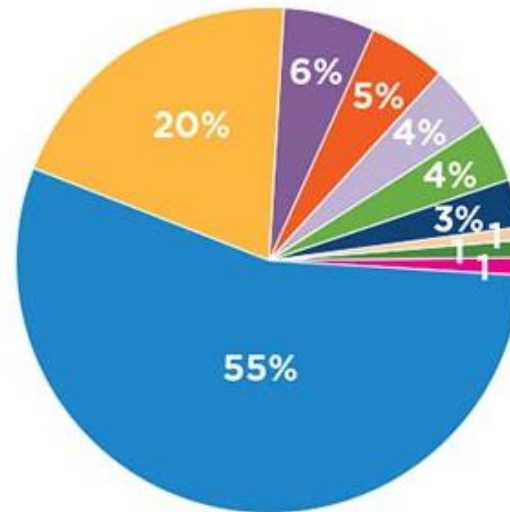
To fund our annual budget, the majority of the money we use to run the city comes from **property taxes** and **utility fees** collected from homeowners and businesses. The remainder comes from:

- User fees and parking revenue
- Development contributions such as Development Cost Levies, Community Amenity Contributions, and connection fees
- Partner contributions from senior levels of government, other agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, and philanthropists
- Debt and investment income

# City Budget 2020

## Money in: Funding the budget

2020 operating revenue, \$1,615 million



55% - Property tax

20% - Utility fees

6% - Licence and development fees

5% - Parking

4% - Program fees

4% - Cost recoveries, grants, and donations

3% - Rental, lease, and other

1% - Investment income

1% - Revenue sharing

1% - By-law fines

# Where do Property Taxes Go?

About half of the property taxes collected funds city services; the rest goes to the Province and other taxing authorities including regional services such as transit, supplying drinking water, and treatment of wastewater.



27% - Provincial school taxes

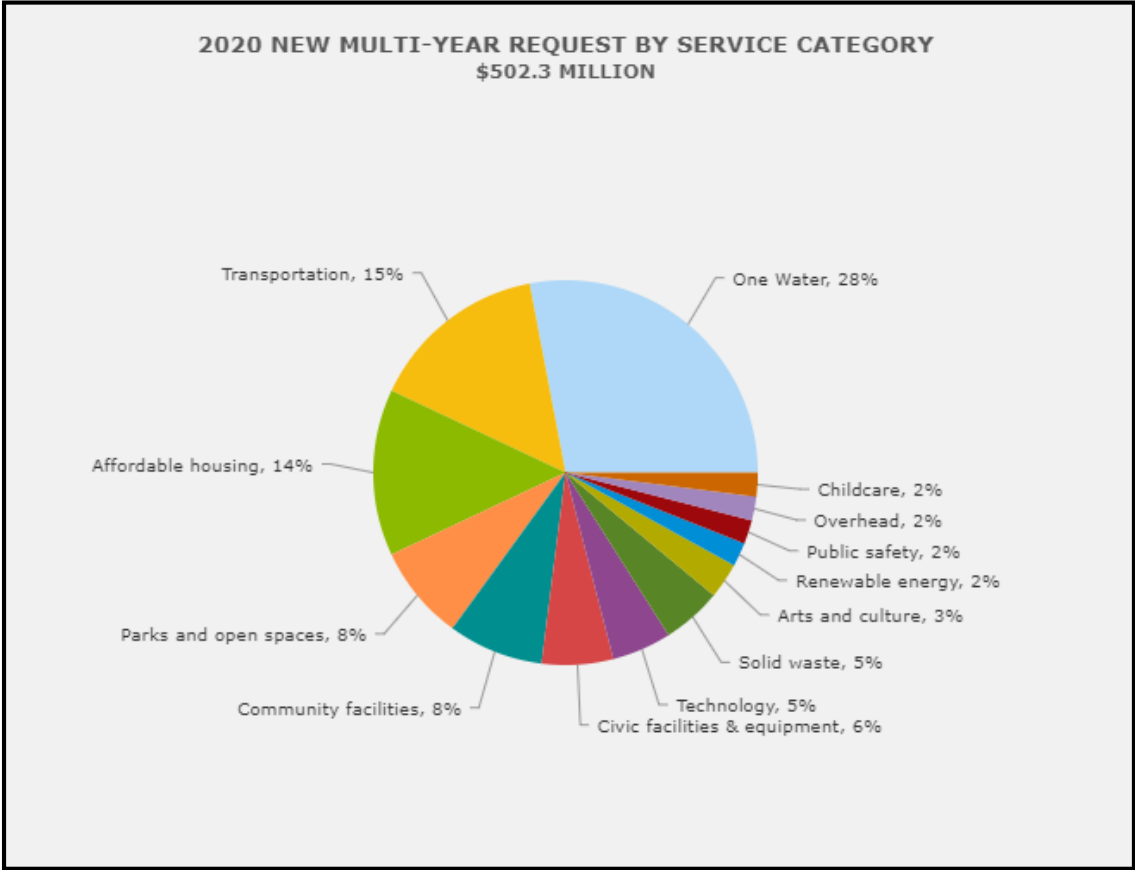
14% - Metro Vancouver (tax and utilities)

6% - Translink

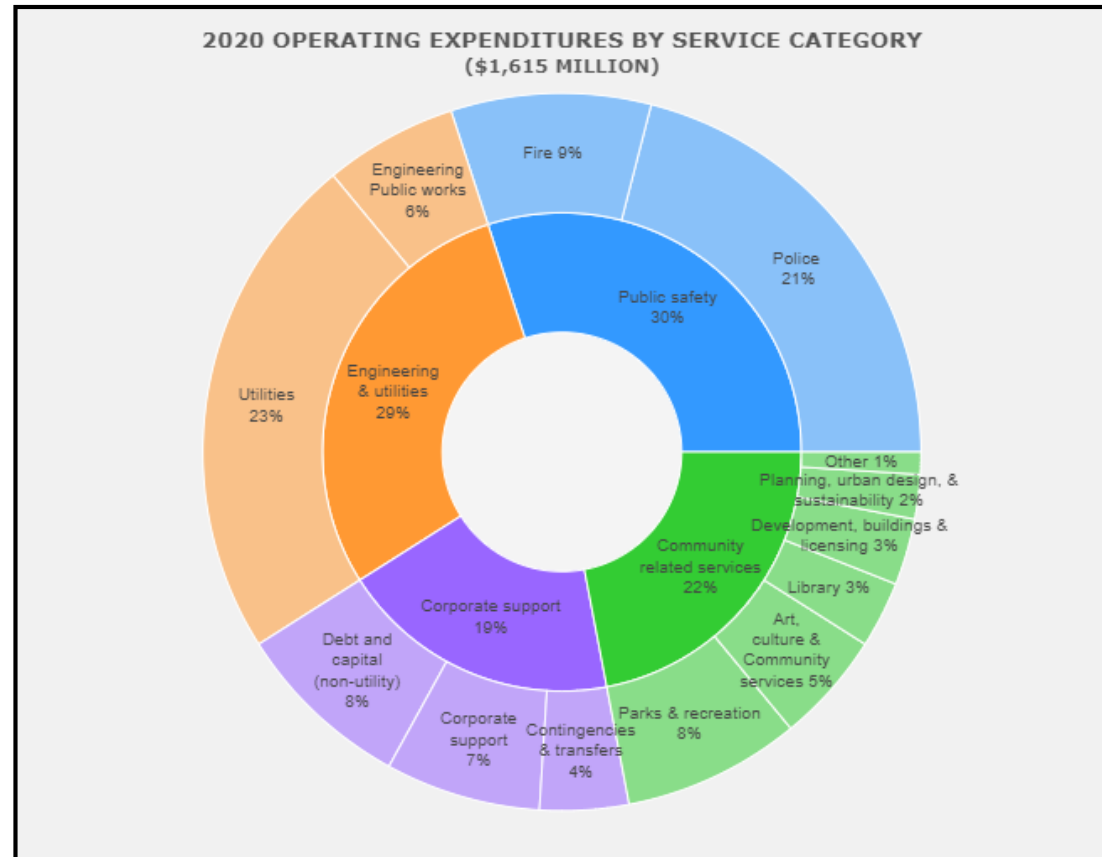
1% - BC Assessment and Municipal Finance Authority

52% - City of Vancouver (tax and utilities)

# Capital Expenditures



# Operating Expenditures



# Now It's Your Turn!



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- There are several activities that go along with this presentation, or you can make up your own.
- You can find the activities on the Civics Toolbox website