

Vibrant Vancouver: City Council's Strategic Priorities

Mid-Term Progress Report

Vancouver City Council is working together to build a sustainable city in which everyone can live, work and thrive.



ACKNOWLEDGING THE UNCEDDED TERRITORIES.

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Strategic Objective No. 1 – Vibrant and diverse	1
Strategic Objective No. 2 – Housing	3
Strategic Objective No. 3 – Supporting business	5
Strategic Objective No. 4 – City services and infrastructure	6
Strategic Objective No. 5 – Safety and security	7
Strategic Objective No. 6 – Climate emergency	9
Strategic Objective No. 7 – Healthy, inclusive and equitable	10
Strategic Objective No. 8 – Reconciliation	11
Strategic Objective No. 9 – Good government	12

We do all we can to ensure Vancouver is a dynamic and vibrant city, with a great range of exciting and engaging amenities and events throughout the city.

Intended outcomes

- Create vibrant public spaces
- Enable large-scale sporting, cultural and arts events
- Revive Chinatown's vibrancy
- Deliver outstanding parks and recreation services
- Support diverse cultural communities



Strategic Objective No. 1 Vibrant and Diverse

More large-scale destination events. In partnership with Destination Vancouver and Vancouver Hotel Destination Association, supported 14 sport and 13 cultural destination events in 2024, including the Grey Cup, with \$117 million economic impact. Planning underway for 2025 Invictus Games, Web Summit Vancouver and 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Cultural Destination Fund. \$1.9 million fund created in partnership with Destination Vancouver and Vancouver Hotel Destination Association to attract new major events to Vancouver.

Outdoor spaces. Relaxed patio regulations, upgraded five public plazas, delivered Blood Alley Plaza and converted three parklets to permanent installations.



Uplifting Chinatown

More active transportation options. Launched Lime public e-scooter pilot and extended Mobi bike system to UBC.

Gastown revitalization. Summer 2024 Water Street pedestrian zone pilot and repairs to Maple Tree Square.

Uplifting Chinatown. \$2 million annual investment. Street parking rate adjustments have increased traffic. Opened City Hall satellite office. 45% increase in micro-cleaning service.

IN CHINATOWN

1,750
graffiti removal cases

\$2M
annual investment

45%
increase in micro-cleaning

Food and beverages in parks and at beaches. New food and beverage services at Kits Pool. Alcohol sales at Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park Pitch and Putt. Piloted alcohol consumption on select beaches.

More events in parks. Lifted mortarium on large commercial events in parks. 2024 NHL Playoffs in the Park and community centres.

Enhanced greenspaces. Upgraded seven greenspaces across the City, including Tatlow and Volunteer Parks, Riley Park playground and China Creek Skate Park.



Batch pop-up bar
at **Kitsilano Pool**

We work with senior governments and other partners to address the local housing crisis, with the goal of ensuring that appropriate housing options are available for everyone in Vancouver.

Strategic Objective No. 2 Housing

Surge in rental housing starts.

Doubled rental housing construction starts rate from 2023 to mid-2024: the highest rate in Canada. 7,000 new rental starts over this period.

Broadway Plan. 20,300 new residential units in pipeline, with approximately 75% market rental, 15% below market rental, 7% strata and 1% social housing.

Enabled multiplex homes.

New simplified multiplex zoning, with 330 new permits received to October 2024, delivering 1,000 new homes.

Adoption of **multiplex** zoning



Intended outcomes

Create the right regulatory framework and processes to support the efficient delivery of housing on private lands

Leverage City-owned property to add substantially more market and non-market housing

Work with the Province and other partners to address the homelessness crisis



Enabling more housing city-wide. From January 2023 to September 2024, the City approved 14,160 homes, including 8,260 purpose-built rental and 1,626 new social and supportive housing units.

New Vancouver Housing Development Office. Leveraging City-owned land to deliver market rental housing with approximately 4,200 middle-income housing units to be delivered through the first five projects.

Addressing homelessness. Secured senior government funding for Downtown Eastside storage and wellness hub.

Faster permit processing and reduced costs for builders:

- **Quicker renovation permits.** Straightforward renovation permits processed within three days on average.
- **Fewer requirements for small renovations.** Eliminated sewer/water upgrade requirements and insurance requirements for renovation projects less than \$250,000.
- **Faster laneway permits.** 60% reduction in permit processing time for laneway houses.
- **Fewer permit requirements for low-density housing.** Eliminated 65% of permit requirements for low-density housing projects.
- **Multiplex strides.** Established dedicated team to expedite multiplex applications; commencing early 2025, combined development/building permits will reduce processing time by 50% for many multiplex projects.
- **Auto-issued sprinkler permits.** Sprinkler permits now auto-issued online; 90% permits issued within 24 hours.
- **New digital tools in application process.** New digital tools to simplify application preparation and submission; e-comply pilot for automated plan checking.
- **Lower fees.** 20% reduction in building permit fees for affordable housing.

PERMITTING

60%
reduction in permit processing time for laneway houses

65%
permit requirements eliminated for low-density housing projects

20%
reduction in building permit fees for affordable housing



We ensure the City is doing our part to ensure our local economy is robust and resilient, and Vancouver is a place in which businesses can thrive and succeed.

Intended outcomes

Transform the City's permitting and licensing processes to achieve Council's 3-3-3-1 targets

Do our part to support local business and ensure the business climate is welcoming

Provide support to the local film, television, music and digital entertainment industries

Provide support to green economy sectors



Strategic Objective No. 3 Supporting business

Faster business licences. Introduction of online licence applications. 85% reduction in average processing time to five days. First jurisdiction to accept BC digital credentials for business licence applications.

Faster commercial renovation permits. 45% reduction in processing times, 2024 vs 2023.

Property tax relief for independent business. Development Potential Relief Program launched, providing \$6 million property tax relief to over 1,700 businesses and non-profits over 2023 and 2024.

Modernized liquor policy. Removed all distance requirements. Lifted the moratorium on new and expanded liquor establishments and permitted sale of wine/beer in qualifying grocery stores.

Employment lands. Approved modernized industrial land policies and home-based business regulations.

Greater focus on business support. Replaced Vancouver Economic Commission with in-house Vancouver Business and Economy Office, generating \$2.9 million annual savings.



Supporting local businesses

SUPPORTING BUSINESS

6M
in property tax relief to
1,700 business and non-profits

85%
reduction in average processing time
for business licensing to five days

45%
in processing time for commercial
renovation permits

We deliver the high-quality city services and public infrastructure that make Vancouver a healthy, safe, beautiful and enjoyable place for everyone.

Intended outcomes

Make sure Vancouver's water, sewerage and drainage systems are effective, well-maintained and environmentally friendly

Make sure Vancouver's solid waste services are effective, efficient and environmentally friendly

Ensure Vancouver's bridge, road, sidewalk and street-lighting infrastructure is effective and well-maintained

Ensure excellent Vancouver civic facilities



Strategic Objective No. 4 City services and infrastructure

Expanded water and sewerage systems. 5.3 km new pipes to support population growth. 12.5 km of sewer separations, plus upgrades to several sewer pump stations.

Faster utility connections. Residential water/sewer connection times reduced by 75% to 1.9 months. Residential connection backlog reduced by 82%.

Improved solid waste services. 20% more trucks supporting solid waste services, more efficient routes, plus 54 circular economy events for repairing, swapping and recycling over 2023/2024.

Enhancing our public realm. \$6 million Uplifting Communities investment in neighbourhoods in 2025 for sidewalk/street rehab, pole painting, street cleanliness and place-making initiatives.

More green rainwater infrastructure. Runoff from an incremental 7.5 hectares of street area now treated via green rainwater infrastructure, rather than flowing into sewers.

More onsite rainwater management. Diverted an incremental 245 million litres of rainwater runoff from sewers through rainwater management on individual building sites.



Sewer separation **upgrades**

CITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

82%

reduction in permit backlog of residential sewer and water connections to new homes

76%

reduction in permit wait times for residential sewer and water connections

245M

litres of rainwater runoff diverted from sewers

We work to provide effective emergency response and emergency planning services that make Vancouver safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Intended outcomes

- Reduce property and violent crime
- Invest in preventative safety and security programs
- Invest in preventing fires
- Be prepared for large-scale emergencies
- Enhance the safety of our transportation network



Strategic Objective No. 5 Safety and security

Increased police resources. Additional 100 VPD officers and increased walking patrols and more agile response capabilities.

Mental health supports. Funding for Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Urgent Mental Health and Substance Abuse Program. Doubled response capacity for Car 87/88. Clinical resource in Operational Command Centre. Mental health crisis de-escalation team with unique Indigenous Crisis Response.

Bear spray restrictions. Sales of bear spray to people restricted to people aged 19+ with ID requirement.

Less violent crime. Violent crime down 7% from January to September 2024.



Cool kits distributed during extreme heat events

Less property crime. From January to September 2024, property crime down 11%, break and enters down 28%, vehicle-related theft down 19%.

Improved fire safety. 17 net new firefighter positions; 33% reduction in SRO structure fires and 20% reduction in SRO alarm calls (October 2024 vs 2023); banned sale of continuous butane lighters.

Encampment management. Established a new cross-department Integrated Response Team. Resolution of major encampments on East Hastings Street and CRAB Park.

Building Safer Communities Program. Federal funding partnership to prevent youth violence. 28 grants awarded to date totalling \$2.2 million.

Action to protect Indigenous women and girls. Substantial action on the report of the National Inquiry of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, including funding the Saa'ust Centre that provides Indigenous medicine and support for survivors.

Extreme heat support to vulnerable individuals. Distributed 3,200 cool kits, 130 cooling vests for people with disabilities, 500 air cleaners for wildfire smoke and funding for 13 community organisations.

Safer streets. Increased pedestrian crossing time at 44 locations; eight new pedestrian signals on arterial streets.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

33%
reduction in SRO structure fires

3,200
cool kits distributed during extreme heat events

28
accessible signals for vision-impaired people

11%
decrease in property crime from January to September 2024

Pedestrian scramble
at Robson & Granville



We are responding to the climate emergency through environmental initiatives, greenhouse gas emission reductions, and climate change adaptation measures.

Intended outcomes

Incorporate climate change adaptation and resilience measures into our work

Make sure we conserve fresh water and our local waters are healthy and clean

Reduce Vancouver's GHC emissions from transportation in line with overall Climate Emergency Action Plan goals

Increase production of renewable energy within Vancouver



Strategic Objective No. 6 Climate emergency

More walkable communities. Enacted multiplex R1-1 zoning which will allow more people to live within walkable neighbourhoods.

Reduced GHG emissions from large commercial buildings. Implemented benchmarking and emissions limits for large existing office/retail buildings, expected to result in a reduction of 24,000 tonnes of GHG annually by 2030.

New embodied carbon reporting. Embodied carbon reporting requirements for new, large buildings, advancing toward goal of 40% reduction for new construction.

Reduced parking requirements. Eliminated minimum parking requirements for residential development. Expected to avoid 26,000 tonnes of embodied carbon emissions associated with parkades.

More EV chargers. Implemented incentives to install electric vehicle chargers in gas stations and commercial parking lots.

Lower-carbon NEU energy production. Tripled low-carbon energy generation for the City's neighbourhood energy utility.

Tatlow and Volunteer Park stream restored. Daylighted the stream for improved water management and enhanced biodiversity.



Tree Planting
East Hastings



Restoration of historical
stream Tatlow Creek

We put Vancouverites' physical and mental health front and centre as we make service, infrastructure, and policy decisions, and strive to alleviate barriers to residents' well-being and sense of belonging

Intended outcomes

Work with the Province and other partners to address the mental health and addiction crisis

Do our part to ensure we have sufficient childcare options for Vancouver families

Work to ensure Vancouver's cultural communities feel included and respected

Make sure our libraries are dynamic social and learning hubs across the city

Ensure Vancouver is a seniors-friendly, accessible city

Do our part to ensure Vancouver residents are physically and mentally healthy



Strategic Objective No. 7 Healthy, inclusive and equitable

Delivered more childcare spaces. Simplified childcare regulations and added 1,800 new childcare spaces across Vancouver since 2022.

Supporting social service and cultural organizations. Invested \$73 million in delivery of social services and cultural programs over 2023 and 2024, in the form of operating and capital grants.

Improved accessibility. New regulations to ensure elevators are properly maintained; more ground-floor units in residential buildings; new accessible parking standards; and installed 280 new curb ramps.

Applied "older persons" lens to City work. Created coordinating role to lead strategy development and ensure that seniors' needs are reflected in City policies, regulations and services.

Komagata Maru Place. Commemorated Komagata Maru incident with new ceremonial name for Canada Place.

Updated Vancouver Heritage Register policy. Updated the Vancouver Heritage Register policy to reflect Vancouver's diverse cultures and drive greater inclusivity and equity in land-use decisions.

Enhanced library services for seniors and children. Improved physical layout and hours for Accessible Services at Central Library. 225 inclusive children's programs across all branches.



Increased accessibility at West Point Grey Library Branch



Official second name of Canada Place – Komagata Maru Place

We maintain mutually respectful relationships with and work to support and advance the rights of local Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous Peoples.

Intended outcomes

Advance the City of Vancouver United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Task Force recommended actions

Support Indigenous land development and stewardship

Provide programs and services to support local Indigenous Peoples



Strategic Objective No. 8 Reconciliation

UNDRIP strategy. First municipality in Canada to adopt a strategy for the implementation of United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples Rights (UNDRIP) in 2022. The City's UNDRIP Action Plan was presented and approved by City Council in the summer of 2024. Prioritizing work on 15 of 32 actions. City commemorated 10 years as a City of Reconciliation.

Supporting Indigenous-led land development projects. Introduced land use policy statements supporting the Jericho Lands and Heather Lands projects; continuing support for construction of the Senakw development in accordance with the Servicing Agreement established between the City and Squamish Nation.

Library reconciliation programming. Over the past year, 4,100 people attended 130 Indigenous-themed programs at VPL, including Indigenous Considerations for Newcomers and Indigenous Reads Book Club.

Social and cultural funding. Provided \$4.2 million in direct funding for Indigenous social and cultural programs (includes social and cultural grants, VCH Indigenous Crisis Response Team).



The City commemorated 10 years as a **City of Reconciliation** in June 2024.

We responsibly steward the public funds with which we are entrusted, ensure we have an efficient administrative infrastructure, and maintain a high performing, engaged workforce.

Intended outcomes

Responsible financial management

A high-performing, engaged workforce

Continuous focus on improving efficiency, effectiveness and customer service



Strategic Objective No. 9 Good government

Top credit rating. City continues to maintain AAA credit rating.

Mayor's Budget Task Force. Independent panel delivered 17 recommendations to address long-term financial sustainability.

Mitigating pressure on property taxes. Annual revenues from non-tax sources increased by \$15 million in 2024 and projected to increase by incremental \$10 million in 2025.

Ensuring financial stability. As part of the COVID19 pandemic recovery, replenished the City's General Revenue Stabilisation Reserve from \$33 million in December 2021 to \$112 million in December 2024.

Improved return on real estate assets. Dividend generated by the City's Property Endowment Fund has increased from \$9 million to \$18 million per year, from 2022 to 2024.

Delivering more infrastructure and amenities. Budgeted capital investments have increased by 87% from 2022 to 2024, from \$404 million to \$756 million, coupled with greatly improved delivery rates (60% of the City's annual capital budget was delivered in 2022; projected 90% delivery against budget in 2024).

Lower costs related to staff turnover and lost time. Staff turnover reduced from 9% to 6% from 2022 to 2024. Workplace injury rates decreased by 4% over same period.

Responsible management of public funds



PFAS-free firefighter gear. Vancouver Fire Rescue Services becomes first fire service in North America to transition to PFAS-free turnout gear, reducing cancer risk for firefighters.

Leveraging AI. Deploying artificial intelligence to improve customer service and achieve efficiencies, including permit checking, licence plate recognition for parking enforcement, invoice processing, software programming, policy development and language translation.

Focus on continuous improvement. Consolidated several support functions into a single office under the Chief Strategy Officer. Realised \$1 million in savings per year and enhanced focus on operational excellence and efficiency.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

\$15M

increase in annual revenues from non-tax sources in 2024

87%

increase in budgeted capital investments from 2022 to 2024

4%

decrease in workplace injuries

\$9M

increase to \$18 million in dividend generated by the City's Property Endowment Fund per year from 2022 to 2024.



Vancouver Fire Rescue Services holding their **PFAS-free gear**



Vancouver City Council is working together to build a sustainable city in which everyone can live, work and thrive.