



**Regular Council for Workshop**

**Monday, November 10, 2025**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Council Chamber, Second Floor & Zoom  
New Westminster City Hall, 511 Royal Avenue**

Present: Councillor Ruby Campbell, Chair  
Mayor Patrick Johnstone  
Councillor Daniel Fontaine  
Councillor Jaimie McEvoy  
Councillor Paul Minhas  
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

Corporate Officer – Hanieh Berg

Absent: Councillor Tasha Henderson

**1. CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. It was acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. It was recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

**2. AGENDA ADDITIONS & DELETIONS**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the order of the agenda be varied to consider Item 4.4 and Item 4.3 first and that the Agenda for the November 10, 2025 Regular Council for Workshop meeting be approved, as amended.*

**CARRIED**

### 3. MINUTES

#### 3.1 MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Minutes of the Regular Council for Workshop meeting held on October 27, 2025 be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

### 4. PRESENTATIONS & REPORTS

#### 4.1 Budget 2026: Proposed 2026 Utility Rates

Please see Page 5 for action on this matter.

#### 4.2 Budget 2026: 10-Year Capital Vision (2026 – 2035) and Funding Strategy

Please see Page 7 for action on this matter.

#### 4.3 2025 Addendum to the Urban Forest Management Strategy – Canopy and Planting Opportunities Assessment

Please see Page 3 for action on this matter.

#### 4.4 Massey Victory Heights Streetlight Retention Options Subsequent to the Heritage Values Assessment Report

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Julie Schueck, Schueck Heritage Consulting, presented the heritage values of streetlights in the Massey Victory Heights neighbourhood and the following information was noted:

- a Heritage Values Assessment evaluates cultural, historic, and architectural significance, including aesthetic, scientific, social, and spiritual values;
- for historic preservation purposes, it is recommended that the streetlights be evaluated as complete units, encompassing the base, pole, and lamp;
- the cultural value of the streetlights stems from their age and connection to early 20<sup>th</sup> century urban development;
- the historic value of the streetlights relate to the role of the Schaaque Machine Works and Foundry in New Westminster's economic development and the neighbourhood's status as Canada's first residential area with underground utilities;
- the scientific value of the streetlights lies in their ability to illustrate past subdivision patterns; and
- the social value of the streetlights highlights the streetscape character of the 1940s–1960s and the benefits of low-height streetlights that preserve views.

Kwaku Agyare-Manu, Acting Director, Engineering, reviewed five options for Council's consideration as presented in the staff report.

In reply to queries from Council, K. Agyare-Manu, advised that (i) a full estimate for the entire area is not yet available, however, a more accurate estimate will be determined at the design phase, (ii) funding for the project will be drawn from the budget identified in the Fire-Year Financial Plan, (iii) all options presented include collaboration with the Residents' Association to identify appropriate selections within the chosen option, (iv) the warm, soft, yellow/orange glow of the existing lamps will be retained, and additional lamps may be considered to offset dimness, (v) costs to refurbish the lamp standards are preliminary estimates, (vi) based on the condition of the existing lamp standards, it may be difficult to identify five that are suitable for refurbishment, (vii) costs related to additional lights, infrastructure work, and coordination with existing utilities will be included within conflict mitigation measures, (viii) an arborist report has been completed to identify potential challenges and solutions, and underground utilities have been reviewed to explore alternate routing options, (ix) any lamp standards removed may potentially be made available to the public upon request, and (x) the typical lifespan of a lamp standard is approximately 30 to 50 years.

MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the report titled "Massey Victory Heights Streetlight Retention Options Subsequent to the Heritage Values Assessment Report" dated November 10, 2025 from the Director, Engineering and Director, Community Services be received for information; and*
2. *THAT Option 5 be endorsed as the next steps for the Massey Victory Heights streetlight replacement project, pending discussions with the Massey Victory Heights Residents' Association.*

**CARRIED**

The meeting recessed at 2:00 p.m.

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The meeting reconvened at 2:05 p.m. with all members of Council present, except Cllr. Henderson.

### **4.3 2025 Addendum to the Urban Forest Management Strategy – Canopy and Planting Opportunities Assessment**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Amelia Needoba, Principal & Senior Forester, Diamond Head Consulting, outlined the City's current canopy coverage, planting opportunities, and a revised timeline for achieving the City's 27% canopy cover target.

A. Needoba advised that (i) the 2022 LiDAR analysis shows canopy cover remains at approximately 17%, with nearly half located on private lands, (ii) priority planting areas were identified throughout the city where the tree canopy is low and in neighbourhoods that are heat-exposed, (iii) modelling indicates that reaching the 27% target is feasible but will require planting an estimated 25,000 trees.

In reply to queries from Council, Dean Gibson, Director, Parks and Recreation, Erika Mashig, Deputy Director, Parks, Planning and Policy, and A. Needoba noted the following:

- while the modelling confirms that the overall density and total number of trees required to achieve the canopy target are feasible, it does not specify exact planting locations;
- some planting could occur through voluntary or incentive-based measures, others through redevelopment and streetscape improvements, and additional opportunities may arise through upcoming Capital projects;
- in an effort to supporting the retention of mature trees, the District of Saanich offers grants to homeowners to assist with their maintenance;
- senior government funding has helped focus investments and minimize the burden on the City's Capital budget and overall finances;
- the Urban Forest Management Strategy includes an action to assess the canopy cover every five years, with a major update anticipated in 2030;
- the Tree Planting Master Plan prioritizes exposed neighbourhoods such as the Brow of the Hill, Queensborough, and Downtown;
- the receipt of a grant from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Emergency Preparedness Fund directs initial planting efforts to socially vulnerable areas; and
- the planting timeline has been revised from 2050 to 2055, and further work will be undertaken to determine the most successful planting rate.

In reply to further queries from Council, staff noted that additional information regarding tree mortality and loss, as well as costs for replacement trees due to emerald ash borers, can be provided.

MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the tree planting priorities and schedule as outlined in the report titled "2025 Addendum to the Urban Forest Management Strategy - Canopy and Planting Opportunities Assessment" dated November 10, 2025 from the Director, Parks and Recreation, be endorsed;*
2. *THAT the revised timeline of 2050-2055 for achieving the 27% city-wide urban forest canopy cover target be endorsed; and*
3. *THAT staff report back on strategies for incentivizing mature tree retention and increased tree planting on privately-owned lands.*

The question on the motion was not called as in response to further queries from Council, E. Mashig advised that (i) approximately 700 stumps within the City have been removed and ground, which is the first step in preparing for new tree plantings, (ii) while the same locations may not all receive new trees, available spaces will be utilized for planting, (iii) to date, all 600 identified dead and dying trees have been removed, (iv) moving forward, a rigorous tree watering and maintenance program will be implemented for the first three to five years, (v) trees are living organisms and, despite best efforts, some mortality is unavoidable, (vi) many mature trees on private property have been retained through construction activities, including careful pruning methods to preserve tree health, (vii) challenges faced by residents, highlights the need for additional education and guidance to support private tree retention and care, and (viii) the City maintains an inventory of trees on urban streets, parks, and other public lands and when a tree asset is removed, it is replaced.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

### 4.1 Budget 2026: Proposed 2026 Utility Rates

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Indeeep Johal, Manager, Financial Services, provided a financial overview of Energy and Climate Action, Water Distribution Utility, Sewer and Drainage Utility, and Solid Waste Utility:

#### Energy and Climate Action

- the proposed 2026 Electrical Utility rate is 3.5%;
- \$0.2M is anticipated in revenue from electrical charging and new account charges and service connections;
- by 2030, a reserve balance of \$24.4M represents approximately a 4.1% replacement value;
- \$35.3M represents the projected purchase of power from BC Hydro;
- 2026 Operating enhancements include (i) \$0.4M contracted services for traffic control and tree trimming services and electrical vehicle charging material and (ii) \$0.1M for administrative support; and
- 2026 Capital projects include (i) \$9.9M for land acquisition for Royal 3 Substation, (ii) \$3.0M for new electrical services, (iii) \$1.9M for fleet vehicles, (iv) \$1.3M for voltage conversion, (v) \$1.2M for the New Westminster Substation Capital Sustainment, (vi) \$1.0M for upgrades to Royal 2 Substation, and (vii) \$1.0M for the Sapperton District Energy.

#### Water Distribution Utility

- the proposed 2026 Water Utility rate is 6.0%;
- \$10.2M represents projected water purchase from Metro Vancouver;
- by 2030, a reserve balance of \$31.7M represents approximately an 8.7% replacement value; and

- 2026 Capital projects include (i) \$3.5M for the Watermain Replacement Program, (ii) \$1.8M for the West-End Watermain Replacement Program, (iii) \$1.0M for fleet vehicles, and (iv) \$0.5M for water trench restoration.

### Sewer and Drainage Utility

- the proposed 2026 sewer rate is 10.0%;
- \$19.9M represents projected sewer levies from Metro Vancouver;
- by 2030, a reserve balance of \$82.4M represents approximately an 8.2% of replacement value;
- 2026 Operating enhancements include (i) \$0.1M for a 1.0 full-time equivalent Sub Foreperson Drainage, (ii) \$0.3M for contracted services to improve drainage service levels in Queensborough, and (iii) \$0.1M for contracted services to support the City's commitment sewer separation and rainwater management; and
- 2026 Capital Projects include (i) \$6.9M for the West End Sewer Separation Program, (ii) \$1.3M for the Sewer Rehabilitation Program, (iii) \$1.1M for sanitary sewer pump upgrades, (iv) \$1.0M for flood management, (v) \$0.9M for SCADA network upgrades, (vi) \$0.7M for the Sewer Separation Program, and (vii) \$0.7M for the Integrated Storm Water Management Plan (ISWMP) program.

### Solid Waste Utility

- the proposed 2026 solid waste rate is 12.0%;
- \$3.2M represent tipping fees;
- an 8.0% solid waste utility rate is projected between 2027-2030 to strengthen the reserves;
- 2026 Operating enhancements include (i) \$0.1M for a 1.0 full-time equivalent Solid Waste Coordinator/Technician, (ii) \$0.1M for policy analysis related to housing regulations and anticipated growth; and
- 2026 Capital projects include (i) \$0.5M for a garbage packer and (ii) \$0.4M for a rear loader garbage truck.

I. Johal further noted that over the next five years, the proposed utility rate increases are intended to support sustainable service delivery, maintain financial stability, and fund critical infrastructure renewal across all utility funds.

In reply to queries from Council, staff noted the following information:

- the proposed rates are generally consistent with those approved in the previous year;
- the proposed utility rates are intended to maintain reserves in an effort to offset the costs of future Capital projects;
- the maintenance and renewal of aging infrastructure is paramount and deferral of these investments poses a higher risk to the City;
- the City offers a partial waiver for water, sewer and solid waste utility for those 65 years of age or older; approximately 250 seniors apply for the waiver annually;

- utility revenues are allocated to support utility operations and any surplus is directed to reserves annually; reserve funds support both ongoing operating needs and future capital projects;
- the City has a robust asset management program that prioritizes and schedules projects annually to meet regulatory requirements, such as sewer separation, and to support the maintenance and replacement of aging infrastructure;
- Capital project priorities are divided between regulatory and rehabilitation work based on the greatest need, with regulatory requirements representing a higher priority over the next few years;
- a reserve fund balance of 5–10% is targeted to ensure adequate funding to support aging assets; and
- based on current projections, utility reserves are in a good position in 2026 but may fall below 5% by 2030.

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the proposed 2026 Utility Rates be endorsed as described in the report titled “Budget 2026: Proposed 2026 Utility Rates” dated November 10, 2025 from the Director, Energy & Climate Action, Director, Engineering & Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Director, Finance.*

*Cllr. McEvoy left the meeting (3:42 p.m.).*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion took place on (i) timing of rate increases, (ii) cost analysis, (iii) internal cost reductions, and (iv) external pressures.

The question on the motion was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

*Cllr. McEvoy returned to the meeting (3:47 p.m.).*

### 4.2 Budget 2026: 10-Year Capital Vision (2026 – 2035) and Funding Strategy

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Gary So, Senior Manager, Financial Services, noted the following information:

- approximately 8% of Transportation Assets (TAMP 2020) are considered to be in “very poor” condition;
- approximately 29% of Facilities and Buildings Assets (FAMP 2024) are considered to be in “poor” or “very poor” condition;
- a funding gap of approximately \$8.6M for transportation assets and \$6.8M for facility assets have been identified;
- a funding gap is also likely to exist for Parks and Natural Assets;
- over the next 10 years, more than 200 vehicles—including eight fire and rescue vehicles—are expected to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$33M, along with equipment replacements totaling approximately \$37M;

- future infrastructure needs driven by new housing legislation will create additional funding gaps beyond aging infrastructure;
- the 10-Year Capital Vision (2026–2036) aims to maintain infrastructure in a “good” state of repair and reduce infrastructure deficits, with a total planned investment of \$304.6M;
- planned investments to address infrastructure and amenity needs driven by a growing population total \$105.3M;
- long-term debt is not recommended due to current interest rates and survey results from the 2025 Budget indicate that approximately half of respondents expressed concern about the City’s long-term financial sustainability;
- reserve funds are the primary funding source for Capital projects; the General Fund reserve balance is estimated to be approximately \$125M; if no new funding source is identified, this balance is projected to be at a deficit of approximately \$80M by 2025; and
- as a result of the anticipated deficit, staff recommend introducing a Capital Levy for infrastructure renewal or replacement, which would provide a stable, dedicated funding source.

In reply to queries from Council, staff noted the following information:

- work is prioritized based on whether it supports policy and regulatory requirements, enabling multi-year projects that facilitate housing, commercial, and industrial development in the City;
- the proposed esplanade repairs apply only to City-owned property;
- the Sustainable Transportation Promotion & Enable program focuses on education and promotion of sustainable transportation, including demand management and awareness of existing transportation plans;
- the Sixth Street Great Street project will continue into 2026 to complete remaining work and finalize the project; public realm work on Great Streets supplements engineering efforts to advance the Seven Bold Steps and create a people-centered public realm;
- the West Pier Park west expansion, including most construction and ongoing washroom work funded in the 2026/27 budget, is underway, while remediation of the former fire site at the other end of the park continues with planning-funded resources;
- the new Media Gallery is currently hosting an artist-in-residence program, with another phase planned for 2026; an environmental scan is underway of new media arts spaces in the region, including potential funding sources through grants and other opportunities;
- the Biodiversity and Natural Areas Strategy Implementation focuses on natural areas and biodiversity action items, funds selected actions, and works to increase biodiversity, with resources allocated to advancing the City’s green network;



- the concept of a covered multi-sport facility is contemplated and is notionally within available funding;
- the proposed budget of \$250,000 per year is anticipated for unforeseen feasibility studies; in the event there are no such studies, funding would not be allocated;
- the approved budget for the Fenton Street streetscape and drainage project was approximately \$8M;
- deferral of Capital works is not proposed; the proposed Capital Levy is intended to assist with funding existing infrastructure renewal and replacement;
- cost efficiencies have been applied, and construction inflation—typically 1–2% higher than CPI—means that delaying projects will increase costs;
- while opportunities for external funding are being explored, applications cannot be submitted unless the project is included in the City’s Capital budget;
- an aggressive strategy is being pursued, and even with a 1% Capital levy, reserves will not immediately reach the minimum 5% of replacement value;
- future costs and risks are unknown; therefore, a separate, dedicated funding reserve for capital infrastructure replacement is recommended; once the 5-10% target is met, the levy could be reconsidered or reduced;
- the introduction of the proposed Capital levy would put the City in a position whereby it could mitigate the City’s need for long-term borrowing; and
- while the notion of “growth pays for growth” is ideal, there are parameters around development cost charges and amenity cost charges, which results in costs to existing residents.

Staff noted that additional information can be provided regarding (i) esplanade repairs outside of the City’s responsibilities, (ii) remaining work on the Sixth Street Great Street project, (iii) projects within the Transit Priority program, (iv) cost per kilometre for the Crosstown Greenway, (v) high-priority items for the Biodiversity and Natural Areas Strategy Implementation, and (vi) a list of locations with closed-circuit television.

### MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the 10-Year Capital Vision (2026-2035), included as Attachment 1 to the report titled “Budget 2026: 10-Year Capital Vision (2026-2035) and Funding Strategy” dated November 10, 2025 from the Director, Finance, be endorsed.*
2. *THAT Financing Option 1 – Capital Levy at 1.0% be approved to fund the 10-Year Capital Vision.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the meeting adjourn (5:04 p.m.).*

**CARRIED**

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Council Workshop meeting of the Council of the City of New Westminster held on November 10, 2025.

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Councillor Ruby Campbell  
CHAIR

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Hanieh Berg  
CORPORATE OFFICER