

## Attachment 15

### *Budget 2025 Themed Memo – Organizational Effectiveness*



NEW WESTMINSTER

# Memorandum

**To:** Lisa Spitale  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Date:** November 25, 2024

**From:** Lisa Leblanc  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**File:**

**Subject:** 2025 Budget – Advancing the City’s Commitment to Organizational Effectiveness, Resilience and Healthy Governance

---

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe how the City’s continued commitment to organizational effectiveness, resilience, and healthy governance will be advanced in 2025.

## BACKGROUND

On May 8, 2023, Council approved the Strategic Priorities Plan, including 5 strategic priorities, and committed to achieving those priorities in a manner that thoughtfully considers reconciliation; public engagement; diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism (DEIAR); climate action; environment; organizational effectiveness; corporate resilience and; healthy governance.

Council approved additional resources in the 2024 budget to strengthen key areas, including consolidation of several divisions into the new Community Services Department, and the amalgamation of Climate Action and Electrical to form a new Energy and Climate Action Department. Additional resources were also approved by Council to support staff recruitment, information technology, workspace planning and more efficient management of facilities, reconciliation, and public engagement. Some of the allocated resources have been hired, while recruitment continues for several key positions in HR, IT, Indigenous Relations, Energy and Climate Action, and Engineering.

While the work of advancing the Strategic Priorities has continued, staff have also been delivering core services and other Council direction, including establishment of the Crises Response Pilot Project and taking action to advocate for affordable housing and substance use supports, advancing work on emergency management, and opening the t̓em̓sew̓tx̓w̓ Community and Aquatic Centre.

## PRIORITIES FOR 2025

In order to serve a growing and increasingly complex City, while ensuring the organization remains resilient to financial and other risks, several departments plan on continuing to

advance work on foundational improvements in 2025, subject to sufficient resources being in place.

## **Human Resources**

In 2024, the HR department continued to face resourcing challenges, including vacancies and unplanned leaves. This has impacted the effective advancement of a number of initiatives, including recruitment and retention, learning and development, DEIAR, and employee health and wellness. Although attrition, at a corporate level, is now lower and trending back toward pre-COVID levels, recruitment activity has been on the rise, with a 34% increase in job postings relative to 2023. This 34% increase in job postings is due to several factors, including positions that remained vacant following high attrition from COVID-19, an increase in temporary internal opportunities, and the cumulative effect of filling those temporary roles with internal candidates. This also reflects the recruitment activity to fill the new positions that were approved in 2024.

While the 2024 resource enhancements have partially addressed a long-standing resourcing deficit, additional support is needed to perform core HR activities and strategic priorities. The approved 2024 enhancements included the recruitment of an HR Business Partner, which has been filled. The DEIAR Advisor, Learning & Development Specialist, and Benefits Coordinator are in the process of being posted. In addition, a pilot program to partner with a WorkSafeBC agency to oversee WorkSafeBC claims management has been postponed until 2025. These positions are intended to support key strategic initiatives such as DEIAR, learning and development, and employee health and safety in order to lay a strong foundation for the City's long-term objectives and overall organizational effectiveness.

In 2025, HR is shifting its focus to strengthen operational support as the City continues to face high recruitment and labour relations (including bargaining) needs and requirements. To address core HR functions, new positions such as the HR Business Partner, HR Clerk, and Payroll Specialist are being requested. These roles are designed to complement the enhancements from 2024, build a more cohesive HR function and reduce the reliance on temporary solutions.

At the same time, the introduction of new legislation, including the *Pay Transparency Act*, and changes to WorkSafeBC regulations and the *Employment Standards Act* regarding sick leave, has significantly increased the City's compliance requirements. This added workload underscores the need for additional resources to ensure the City remains in compliance with the requirements of these evolving legislation and regulations.

Additionally, in 2025, HR will prioritize development of an HR Strategic Plan that outlines departmental goals, key initiatives, and priorities that support the corporate strategic priorities and objectives. The HR Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for developing an operational People Strategy to contribute to ongoing organizational effectiveness. The People Strategy will continue to strengthen core services to the organization through enhancements to recruitment and retention (including onboarding, engagement, and

succession planning); programs to support the learning and development of both new and existing staff and leadership; and through initiatives aimed at supporting DEIAR and the health, safety and wellness of employees.

## **Community Services**

The Community Services department will oversee development and implementation of several high profile corporate priorities in 2025: a new public website; the evaluation and future of the Community Advisory Assembly pilot; and the roll-out of the Council-endorsed Anvil Centre review recommendations.

The City website is overdue for re-vamp and update to modern accessibility and security standards. Additionally, the new corporate logo is nearing completion and the organization's main public information tool should reflect updated branding. To accomplish this, both Capital and Operating funds are required, including a temporary part time (TPT) communications coordinator (TPT) to enable existing staff to focus on this priority work in 2025.

With the Community Advisory Assembly pilot concluding, formal evaluation of this new model for committee-style engagement and planning for the future will occur in 2025. Since establishing in early 2024, the project has held monthly meetings and provided community feedback on high profile initiatives, enabling deeper engagement, earlier in the City's project and planning cycles. Pending the outcome of the pilot evaluation and decision-making on the future of the Assembly initiative, additional Operating funding will be required to cover external facilitation and event expenses should the Assembly be renewed for another term.

Another priority for 2025 relates to the Council-endorsed 10-Year Anvil Centre Review which was informed by extensive community engagement. With a range of recommendations for enhancing Anvil Centre activation, access, awareness, and patron experience, several Operating Budget enhancements are necessary for 2025, including a temporary communications and outreach specialist (TFT), funding for strategic plan and space planning development, and funding to respond to demand for increased ground floor program activation with community partners.

## **Information Technology**

The IT department is comprised of four separate functional areas: the Helpdesk team, IT Applications, Geographical Information System (GIS) team, and the Network/Infrastructure team. The work that each of these teams does supports all City departments. The Network/Infrastructure team has been chronically under-resourced over the years and the bench strength needed to ensure that critical underlying systems are properly maintained is not in place. In the current state there are a total of 3 positions that support the entirety of the City's IT infrastructure and cyber security efforts. For context, the City's GIS team consists of 4 positions and thus has more depth than the Network team. This has resulted

in compounding technical debt, which exposes the City to risks, lost productivity/expensive downtime and an unsustainable culture of overwork and staff burnout.

Further, the City has undertaken a significant enterprise initiative with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure project but the reliance upon the IT department was underestimated, particularly as the project enters the operational phase.

In the 2024 Budget Enhancement request, the IT department had asked for:

- 2 Network Analyst positions
- 1 Business Systems Analyst position with expertise in JDE/Payroll (to eliminate the key person dependency that currently exists).

The scenario that was approved for 2024 was for one Network Analyst role and the Business Systems Analyst role. To date we have hired the Network Analyst and are close to making an offer for the Business Systems Analyst role.

Analysis indicates that 2 additional positions within the Network/Infrastructure team are needed to right size this foundational functional area which will enable the department to eventually address the technical debt; this will reduce the risks to the City and finally move towards a position of proactive system operation and innovation. One other important goal for the IT department is to enable a formal on-call policy so that technical staff can be on stand-by for any after-hours system or security alerts. Presently this is a best-effort scenario without properly formulated expectations or agreed upon service levels. With the additional positions which have been identified, IT will be able to develop and initiate a policy that enables the IT department to respond to critical alerts after hours. An additional request is for the purpose of formalizing an existing function, by converting an auxiliary position to a regular full time role so that the department can meet the minimum requirement of two Business System Analysts to support the technical aspects of the AMI system.

Among the many technical projects facing the IT department in 2025, two have been identified as corporate high priorities, which will require resources and effort from multiple departments within the City. These are:

1. JD Edwards upgrade: JD Edwards is the City's ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software, which encompasses payroll, Accounts Payable/Receivable, vendor management and more. It is overdue for an upgrade so that it remains supportable and enables the modernization of dependent platforms such as Windows 11 and Microsoft Office. This project will require significant inter-departmental participation for testing and acceptance.
2. Windows 11 upgrade: The City uses Windows 10 as the operating system for all desktops and laptop computers, however Microsoft will be formally ending support for it by October 14, 2025. This means there will no longer be any security patches or bug fixes available from Microsoft. This across-the-board upgrade to Windows 11 will require significant effort as there are numerous software application dependencies that will also require upgrades and testing to

ensure compatibility with Windows 11. In order to ensure successful transition to the new software, while continuing to maintain core service levels, a temporary staff augmentation is needed

### **Chief Administrative Officer and Legislative Services**

The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, through the Intergovernmental Relations division remains focused on securing funding for the City's key strategic initiatives, particularly those related to infrastructure, community health, environmental sustainability, and housing.

Legislative Services is prioritizing improvements to internal processes and implementing operational changes that align with Council's strategic priorities for organizational effectiveness and the principles of transparency, accountability, and accessibility. A key initiative is the development of an electronic database for council resolutions, which will enhance public access to decisions and streamline internal record-keeping; this project will include integrating council voting records, modernizing legislative reporting, and ensuring policies and procedures are current and consistently applied. To ensure successful implementation, a Manager of Records and Information will lead this effort, bringing expertise in records management and governance to modernize practices and maintain consistency. Additionally, the Council Procedure Bylaw is patch worked and in need of replacement to better reflect current legislative processes. These initiatives collectively aim to enhance operational efficiency, ensure accessibility, and uphold good governance.

### **Engineering**

In addition to the projects described above, several other initiatives that do not require additional resources have launched in 2024 and will continue to advance in 2025, including: development of a City-wide Workspace Plan, beginning with implementation of workstation sharing at City Hall; identification and prioritization of community amenity and other land, building, and facility needs to serve the growing city; development of a Public Works Master Plan and initiation of a Works Yard Feasibility Study, and; development of a Strategic Land Strategy.

The volume of tenders, requests for proposal and contracts managed by Engineering and supported by Finance is significant. In order to improve efficiency, while remaining in compliance with corporate procurement policy, several prequalification processes have been undertaken by Engineering and other departments, to create formal short lists of qualified vendors, which improves efficiency and responsiveness in procuring the services of engineering consultants and contractors. This practice of prequalifying vendors, establishing multi-year contracts through more strategic use of requests for proposal, and other procurement efficiencies, will continue to be advanced in 2025

In addition, Engineering has embraced a "Cloud-first" approach to software and looks forward to advancing IT needs in this direction, starting with moving our computerized maintenance management system (Cityworks) to the cloud in 2025.

## **Summary of Proposed Operating Enhancements to Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness**

As outlined above, several key roles are identified to support ongoing implementation of Council's Strategic Priorities Plan, while continuing to deliver core services. All of the positions introduced above are explained further below:

### For Health and Safety, Recruitment and Retention Strategies:

- *Health, Safety and Workplace Wellness Coordinator and Workplace Wellness and Ability Management* – to provide timely and proactive support to employees in workplace wellness, and leave management, while addressing the rising costs of WorkSafeBC insurance premiums. This enhancement request responds to changes in WorkSafeBC legislation and aims to meet the increasing demand for employee wellness programs and effective leave management. Furthermore, this role will support the coordination of critical training for staff dealing with the three crises of houselessness, substance use, and mental health.
- *Human Resources Business Partner* – to support the increasing volume of recruitment, support retention efforts, labour relations, and HR activities across the organization that align with strategic goals and priorities. Given the organization's expanding workforce, the addition of this position is critical to meet growing talent demands, and ensure that HR processes can scale effectively to support long-term growth and organizational objectives.
- *Human Resources Clerk* – to assist the HR team with administrative tasks related to training and development, including core corporate training and the standardized training suite for staff involved in the three crises response. Additionally, this role will provide relief for the customer service desk, allowing HR Assistants to focus more time on supporting recruitment and other priority HR functions.
- *Payroll Specialists* – to ensure the efficient and timely administration of payroll and benefits for a growing workforce, in response to recent changes in employment standards and pay transparency legislation, which necessitate additional resources for compliance and reporting.

### For IT Strategy:

- *Network Analyst/Administrator positions* – the IT infrastructure team has been chronically under resourced for some time. This impacts critical operations as technical debt compounds, increasing risk which then impacts projects and innovation which would otherwise benefit the City. To meet our core obligations and goals aligned with strategic objectives, we need to augment the IT team with additional roles. The demands on the ITS department are increasing due to the

growth of our workforce and with the major projects such as AMI, which will require operational support beyond what the department can currently provide. Requesting an enhancement of two positions which builds upon the enhancement requests for 2024.

- *Business Systems Analyst (AMI Support)* – this position is needed as currently there is only one FTE analyst to support the AMI platform. Our plan is to convert an existing auxiliary position to full time with partial funding coming from the Electrical Utility to cover the difference. There is significant risk in having only one FTE to support this critical system as it currently stands.

#### Position that supports Healthy Governance:

- *Manager, Records & Information* – Legislative Services serves a critical role as secretariat for New Westminster City Council. Staff levels in Legislative Services have remained constant. Given the added statutory and operational responsibilities, the division is increasingly unable to advance key strategic projects due to limited resources. This is impacting the ability to modernize and advance its operations, improve essential services, and comply with legal requirements. It is also affecting the ability to adapt to a rapidly evolving information environment. This position would play a pivotal role in ensuring that the City's records are managed in a way that supports legal compliance, operational efficiency, transparency and public trust – all of which are fundamental to the function of a modern, accountable government.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The following additional resources are required to improve organizational effectiveness, and support public engagement and healthy governance. The resources will be prioritized, and it is recognized that it will take time to mobilize following budget approval, as such, subject to Council approval, they will be activated incrementally over the next couple of years, beginning in the second quarter of 2025.

### **Organizational Effectiveness**

#### Health and Safety and Recruitment and Retention Strategy

1. Health, Safety and Workplace Wellness Coordinator – 1 FTE (\$82K per year plus benefits)
2. Workplace Wellness and Ability Management Partner Agency – \$65K per year
3. Human Resources Business Partner – 1 FTE (\$121K per year plus benefits)
4. Human Resources Clerk – 1 TFT FTE (\$54K per year plus benefits for 2 years)
5. Payroll Specialist – 1 FTE (\$63K per year plus benefits)
6. Payroll Specialist – 1 TFT FTE (\$63K per year plus benefits for 2 years)



### IT Strategy

1. Network Analyst – 1 FTE (\$97K per year plus benefits)
2. Network Administrator – 1 FTE (\$105K per year plus benefits)
3. Business Systems Analyst (AMI ) – 1 FTE (\$105K per year plus benefits – additional funding is \$70K per year to convert from auxiliary to RFT )
4. IT Temporary Staff Augmentation (\$400K one-time funding)

### Public Engagement

1. Potential facilitation and event costs for future Community Advisory Assembly, pending evaluation of the pilot term and decision-making on the future of the Assembly initiative (\$50K estimate, placeholder funding)

### Healthy Governance

1. Manager, Records & Information – 1 FTE (\$100K per year plus benefits)

Annual budget for 2025 = \$1.27M

Staff will be asking Council to consider these funding requests in the 2025 Operating Budget deliberation process.

### **CONCLUSION**

The initiatives described above aim to improve the City's ability to serve a growing and increasingly complex community, while maintaining operations amid current and future challenges. By strengthening these areas, the City will be better equipped to plan and deliver services efficiently, manage resources effectively, ensure strong leadership and governance, uphold accountability and transparency, and respond to a range of challenges, including emergencies, climate impacts, and other economic, social, or environmental shifts.