



**Regular Council**

**Monday, February 23, 2026  
6:00 p.m.**

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

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

Corporate Officer – Hanieh Berg

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

Mayor Johnstone called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He 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 Agenda for the February 23, 2026 Regular Council meeting be approved.*

**CARRIED**

**3. DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

**3.1 Delegations**

Branka Vujasin, YesI Can Community Outreach Charitable Foundation, spoke to the work of the not-for-profit Foundation, highlighting it supports individuals in crisis by building bridge of connection, compassion, and opportunity through outreach, education, and community partnerships.

B. Vujasin noted that the YesICan Community Outreach magazine connects neighbourhoods through stories, education, and inspiration, and presents fundraising opportunities to grow the Foundation in a sustainable manner. B. Vujasin then requested guidance on accessing appropriate funding, grants, and community resources.

With the aid of a photograph (copy on file, Legislative Services) Jim Hurst, expressed concerns regarding the design and construction of the Rotary Crosstown Greenway, and in particular on the new sidewalks cross slope along Seventh Avenue. J. Hurst referenced the City's Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw, the use of discretionary engineering approvals, and the City's Official Community Plan and transportation policies, noting that the resulting conditions negatively impact walkability and accessibility, particularly for vulnerable users. J. Hurst queried why higher cross-slopes were permitted and whether alternative design solutions were considered.

John Hughes, spoke in favour of Item 6.3 – Triple Net Lease Reform, expressing support to reform triple net lease practices by shifting the property tax burden from commercial tenants to property owners. J. Hughes commented on the financial and operational impacts on tenants, noting the stress this places on small, locally owned businesses. J. Hughes then emphasized the broader community importance of sustaining independent businesses, urging Council to vote in favour of the proposed motion to improve fairness and support commercial business viability.

Radnoush Movahedi, owner of Able Auto Glass, raised concerns regarding prolonged construction impacts at the corner of Eighth Street and Agnes Street, and in particular repeated road closures, some of which appear to be unpermitted, inconsistent communication, and extended access disruptions. R. Movahedi noted that these conditions have adversely affected business operations, expressed frustration with responses received from the City, and requested greater accountability, coordination, and respect in managing construction activities and associated closures.

Pat Muise, spoke regarding regional bridge infrastructure and traffic impacts on New Westminster and expressed concern that recent and proposed bridge investments direct additional traffic through the city rather than diverting it. P. Muise noted the age and limitations of existing bridges, and advocated for future bridge upgrades or replacements to incorporate grade-separated overpasses that would move regional traffic more efficiently and reduce congestion within New Westminster.

Jason Congdon called on Council to take action to address harassment and bullying directed at elected officials and municipal employees. J. Congdon cited research that indicates widespread harassment in the public sector, disproportionate impacts on women and racialized groups, which deters one's willingness to serve in public office. J. Congdon then spoke to recommendations to promote accuracy and civility in political discourse, avoid sensationalism and divisive rhetoric, and strengthen policies, bylaws, and codes of conduct to better protect staff and officials and support respectful public engagement.

Karter Deedman joined the meeting by electronic means and spoke to reducing community greenhouse gas emissions and the challenges faced by non-profit housing providers in undertaking energy retrofits. K. Deedman referenced the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, noting that older buildings account for a significant share of energy use and emissions, largely due to gas heating, and that non-profit housing represents a small but critical portion of the housing stock. K. Deedman noted that aging buildings, limited financial capacity, and reliance on incentive programs create barriers to timely and sustainable upgrades, and requested that Council direct staff to explore programs to support energy efficiency improvements for buildings operated by non-profit organizations.

### **3.2 BC Housing Tiny Homes Village**

Two pieces of correspondence were received (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedules 1 and 2).

With the aid of a presentation, Naomi Brunemeyer, Director of Regional Development, Lower Mainland, BC Housing, spoke to the Homelessness and Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) program and introduced the Tiny Homes Village at 502 Twentieth Street.

N. Brunemeyer outlined details of the Tiny Homes Village, noting that while an operator has not been identified, HEARTH's service model includes 24/7 staffing, health care referrals and wellness checks, and connection and referrals to community services and support groups; the 30 self-contained units are anticipated to be operational by the end of 2026 and provide temporary housing for up to six years.

In response to queries from Council, N. Brunemeyer and staff noted the following:

- a robust site selection process was undertaken, considering factors such as (i) site size and slope, (ii) whether the site was available for immediate use, (iii) the absence of the floodplain and impacts to significant trees, (iv) access to transit and pedestrian and cycling networks, (v) emergency vehicle access, and (vi) potential impacts to surrounding neighbourhoods;
- approximately six City-owned sites across multiple neighbourhoods were evaluated and the selected site ranked highest based on the established criteria;
- the HEARTH program is grounded in the principles of Housing First and harm-reduction and does not operate as a dry model;
- the selection of a site operator will include careful consideration of a proponent's qualifications with emphasis on experience and established access and assessment processes to identify and match residents with services;
- residents elect to live HEARTH housing and agree to policies and community expectations established by the operator, which supports a sense of belonging and community integration;
- the HEARTH initiative forms part of a broader five-year prevention and crisis response plan that includes wrap-around supports and the development of permanent, purpose-built housing; and

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- HEARTH is a transitional, stepping-stone housing option intended to address gaps in traditional shelter models, with recognition of the over-representation of Indigenous peoples among the unhoused population and the need for culturally appropriate, individualized housing forms and programs to better meet diverse needs.

MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the report titled “BC Housing Tiny Homes Village” dated February 23, 2026 from the Chief Administrative Officer, be received for information, and*
2. *THAT a Good Neighbour Agreement be required for the BC Housing Tiny Homes Village at 502 Twentieth Street.*

The question on the motion was not called as discussion took place and the following information was provided:

- rather than Good Neighbour Agreements, BC Housing utilizes a province-wide process to address possible externalities that includes a letter of commitment outlining design, support, and operational provisions, an Operations Management Plan delivered by a non-profit operator under a defined term of commitment, and a Neighbourhood Inclusion Table to support community integration;
- the Neighbourhood Inclusion Table approach was co-developed with the City of New Westminster, moving away from community advisory committees and Good Neighbour Agreements, to provide a clearer framework that outlines commitments, issue-resolution pathways, and escalation processes;
- the Neighbourhood Inclusion Table would be established during the operational growth period to support an effective feedback loop and would continue beyond the initial four months for as long as it is deemed necessary;
- once the site is operational, the operator will share clear contact information outlining who to call for specific issues, with on-site staff and defined reporting pathways to BC Housing depending on the nature of the concern;
- BC Housing will not operate a facility that is not working for residents or the surrounding community; there are established service delivery and third-party intervention frameworks, such as adjustments to the operating model, changes in the operator, or revisions to the mix of tenants;
- the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund is allocated on a per-project basis and secured for the lifetime or duration of the project, with funding supporting core service connections, subject to a maximum of \$500,000;
- site infrastructure needs for the subject site have not been fully determined;
- BC Housing is compiling information on the length of residency, including data on tenancy stability and vacancy rates across Phase 1 models;
- while shelter-based models experienced higher turnover, tiny home models were more desirable and demonstrated greater stability; and
- HEARTH communities are selected based on the presence of encampments that create visible harm and have proven difficult to resolve at the municipal level.

As a result of the discussion, the following amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the motion be amended by deleting “Good Neighbour Agreement” and replacing it with “a Letter of Commitment, Operations Management Plan, Neighbourhood Inclusion Table, 24/7 staffing and priority selection process for New Westminster.”*

The question on the amendment was not called as Councillor Fontaine raised a point of order; however, the Chair ruled that the point of order was not valid. Councillor Fontaine challenged the ruling of the Chair.

Mayor Johnstone then put the question “*Shall the Chair be sustained?*” to the rest of Council. The question was called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed. As a result, the ruling of the Chair was sustained.

The meeting recessed at 8:22 p.m.

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The meeting reconvened at 8:30 p.m. with all members of Council present.

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

The question on the motion, as amended, was not called as there was agreement to consider Parts (1) and (2) separately.

The question on Part (1) was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

The question on Part (2) was then called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

## 5. CONSENT AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT Items No. 4.1 through No. 4.8 be adopted by general consent, with the removal of Items No. 4.3, and 4.4.*

**CARRIED**

### 4.1 Minutes – Public Hearing

*THAT the Minutes of the Public Hearing held on January 26, 2026 be adopted.*

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

### 4.2 Minutes – Regular Council

*THAT the Minutes of the Regular Council meeting held on February 9, 2026 be adopted.*

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

**4.3 2025 Filming Activity**

Please see Page 6 for action on this item.

**4.4 Community Grant Program Update 2025-2026**

Please see Page 7 for action on this item.

**4.5 Development Cost Charges Reserve Funds Expenditure Bylaw No. 8572, 2026**

*THAT Development Cost Charges (DCC) Reserve Funds Expenditure Bylaw No. 8572, 2026 (Attachment 1) to authorize a total expenditure of \$10.466M from the DCC Reserves for fiscal year 2025 be introduced and given first, second, and third readings.*

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

**4.6 Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Pathway One – City-Funded Cooling Assessments for Rental Buildings**

One piece of correspondence was received (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedule 3)

1. *THAT the cooling assessment pilot program as part of Pathway One of the Vulnerable Buildings Assessment project as outlined in the report titled “Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Pathway One – City-Funded Cooling Assessments for Rental Buildings” dated February 23, 2026 from the Director, Energy and Climate Action, be endorsed.*
2. *THAT staff be directed to enter into an agreement with the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator program administrators to offer the cooling assessment pilot program within the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator program.*
3. *THAT staff report back with outcomes of the cooling assessment pilot program.*

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

**4.7 Proclamation – International Purple Day for Epilepsy Awareness, March 26, 2026**

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

**4.8 Proclamation – Amyloidosis Awareness Month, March 2026**

**ADOPTED ON CONSENT**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**

**4.3 2025 Filming Activity**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the report titled “2025 Filming Activity” dated February 23, 2026 from the Director, Community Services, be received for information.*

The question on the motion was not called as in response to queries from Council, Jennifer Miller, Acting Director, Community Services, and Jen Arbo, Manager, Community Partnerships, noted that (i) revenue from filming activities are deposited into the City’s general budget, (ii) filming activity generates significant recoverable costs, including signage, police and fire services, film liaison support, and staff overtime, (iii) approximately one third of all film permits are for the Queen’s Park neighbourhood, (iv) revenue from filming activities is approximately \$285,000, excluding direct spending in the community, (v) production companies provide financial compensation to homeowners, non-profit organizations, and businesses for use of their location and/or building as well as for any inconvenience that may occur as a result of the activity, and (vi) the City receives several complaints each year as a result of filming activities, primarily related to parking.

Discussion ensued on the potential partial allocation of revenue collected from filming activities to support arts and culture throughout the city.

As a result of the discussion, the following amendment was introduced:

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT a Part 2 be added to read as follows “THAT staff report back on practices in other municipalities regarding the allocation and use of filming revenue.”*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

The question on the motion, as amended, was not called, as there was agreement to consider Parts (1) and (2) separately.

The question on Part (1) was called and it was **CARRIED**.

The question on Part (2) was called and it was **CARRIED** with Cllrs. Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

#### **4.4 Community Grant Program Update 2025-2026**

In response to queries from Council, staff noted that (i) the *Fired Up for Football* grant program is a low-barrier initiative, currently accepting grant applications from individuals, businesses, and community organizations to support FIFA-related activities, (ii) \$10,000 was budgeted for the *Love New West* event through existing funds and the event came in under budget, (iii) *Love New West* was promoted through the City’s regular communication channels, including social media, the City website, and mail, (iv) it is challenging to quantify the number of attendees for *Love New West* as the Anvil Centre is open to the public, (v) *Love New West* was effective in demonstrating community impact, and (vi) approximately \$6,000 was expended for the *Love New West* event.

Donnie Rosa, Chief Administrative Officer, advised that the value of in-kind and other savings can be captured in future reports to demonstrate the comprehensive value of events.

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the report titled “Community Grant Program Update 2025-2026” dated February 23, 2026, from the Director, Community Services, be received for information.*

**CARRIED**

## **6. MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

### **6.1 Memorandum of Understanding with Century House Association**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT staff engage with leadership of the Century House Association to explore updating the current Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Century House Association with the intent to strengthen collaboration in delivering services to an increasing diverse older adult population in the City.*

**CARRIED**

### **6.2 Advancing a Vision Zero Approach to Road Safety**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the City of New Westminster submit a resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association calling on UBCM to request the Province to advance its commitment to Vision Zero and further support local government partners through:*

- 1. expansion of the Vision Zero Road Safety Grant program by providing additional funding to introduce a third funding stream with a cap higher than the current \$20,000 limit to fund more ambitious local government and First Nation community road safety initiatives; and*
- 2. undertaking a comprehensive review of data collected by provincial ministries and agencies in relation to motor vehicle injury and death incidents, and develop strategies for proactive data sharing between those agencies and local governments to inform local road safety improvements.*

**CARRIED**

### **6.3 Triple Net Lease Reform**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the City of New Westminster submit a resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association calling on the Province of BC to review and reform commercial leasing legislation, including the use of triple net leases, to improve transparency, fairness, and protections for commercial tenants, particularly small and locally-owned businesses.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

**6.4 Enhanced Mental Health Supports Following Infant Loss**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the City of New Westminster submit a resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association calling on the Province of BC to ensure ongoing provincial funding for research related to pregnancy loss and bereavement care, to provide standardized education and training for health care providers on how to deliver trauma-informed, evidence-based care, and to fund bereavement support programs for families who experience pregnancy loss, infant loss, embryo loss, or failed fertility and IVF treatments.*

**CARRIED**

**7. NOTICE OF MOTION**

**7.1 Queensborough School Bus Program**

One piece of correspondence was distributed on table (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedule 4).

Submitted by Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas

*WHEREAS over 230 Queensborough based students and their families rely on the Queensborough bus service to enable students to attend New Westminster Secondary School in a safe, secure and timely manner, without which journeys take three times as long and students are often passed over by overcrowded buses causing them to arrive late or not at all; and*

*WHEREAS a pilot service launched in January 2024 at cost to parents is slated to end on June 30, 2026 despite a campaign promise made on October 8, 2024 that if the NDP government were re-elected, this service would be made ‘permanent and free’; and*

*WHEREAS New Westminster is the second most dense city in Canada, with only one high school, and the acceptance of this density should have already unlocked new funding from senior orders of government;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mayor be requested to write to our three government and opposition MLAs asking they advocate to secure the necessary provincial funding to ensure the Queensborough school bus program becomes ‘free and permanent’ as previously promised; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor write to the Minister of Education and Child Care requesting that additional funding be granted to School District 40 for the Queensborough school bus service to continue and be made permanent (beyond June 30, 2026) and without cost to local families until such time as a new high school is built in the Queensborough community.*

**8. BYLAWS FOR ADOPTION**

**8.1 Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Retail Sale of Cannabis (416 East Columbia Street) Amendment Bylaw No. 8520, 2025**

Three pieces of correspondence were distributed on table (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedules 5 to 7).

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Retail Sale of Cannabis (416 East Columbia Street) Amendment Bylaw No. 8520, 2025 be adopted.*

The question on the motion was not called as in response to queries from Council, Mike Watson, Acting Manager, Development Planning, advised should the proposed bylaw be adopted, retail cannabis use would not be permitted at the subject site; a rezoning application would be required to reinstate such use.

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

In accordance with Section 100 of the *Community Charter*, Cllr. Henderson and Cllr. Minhas declared to be in a potential conflict of interest as they may each have pecuniary interests in Items 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 and left the meeting (10:08 p.m.).

**8.2 Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7925, 2017, Amendment Bylaw (Provincial Housing Legislation Integration) No. 8522, 2025**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7925, 2017, Amendment Bylaw (Provincial Housing Legislation Integration) No. 8522, 2025 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllr. Fontaine

**8.3 Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Non-Profit Housing Development, Phase 2) No. 8528, 2025**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Non-Profit Housing Development, Phase 2) No. 8528, 2025 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

**8.4 Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Land Use Designation Alignments) No. 8530, 2025**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Land Use Designation Alignments) No. 8530, 2025 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

*Cllrs. Henderson and Minhas returned to the meeting (10:10 p.m.).*

In accordance with Section 100 of the *Community Charter*, Cllr. Campbell declared to be in a potential conflict of interest as she may have pecuniary interest in Items 8.5 and 8.6 and left the meeting (10:11 p.m.).

**8.5 Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7925, 2017, Amendment Bylaw (Townhouse Accelerator Initiative) No. 8547, 2025**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7925, 2017, Amendment Bylaw (Townhouse Accelerator Initiative) No. 8547, 2025 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

**8.6 Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Townhouse Zoning Update) No. 8524, 2025**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001, Amendment Bylaw (Townhouse Zoning Update) No. 8524, 2025 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

*Cllr. Campbell returned to the meeting (10:12 p.m.).*

**8.7 Five-Year Financial Plan (2026-2030) Bylaw No. 8571, 2026**

A memorandum on public comments regarding with Five-Year Financial Plan (2026-2030) was distributed on table (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedule 8).

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Five-Year Financial Plan (2026-2030) Bylaw No. 8571, 2026 be adopted.*

**CARRIED**

Opposed: Cllrs. Fontaine  
Minhas

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**10. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Johnstone announced that the City of New Westminster has reached a settlement agreement with IBEW Local 213, consisting of a 3-year term effective April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2028.

Also, Mayor Johnstone advised that Donnie Rosa was appointed to the New Westminster Utility Commission as a Commissioner in her capacity as Chief Administrative Officer.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the meeting adjourn (10:18 p.m.).*

**CARRIED**

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Regular meeting of Council of the City of New Westminster held on February 23, 2026.

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Patrick Johnstone  
MAYOR

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Hanieh Berg  
CORPORATE OFFICER

Schedule 1 to the  
Minutes of the Regular  
Council Meeting held on  
February 23, 2026

**ON TABLE**  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 23, 2026  
Re: Item 3.2

**From:** [Mayor and Councillors](mailto:weranewwest@gmail.com)  
**To:** "[weranewwest@gmail.com](mailto:weranewwest@gmail.com)"  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] FW: 502 20th street housing project  
**Date:** Monday, February 23, 2026 9:48:19 AM

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Hello,

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your email. Your correspondence will be forwarded to the Mayor and each Councillor, and will form part of the public record of the February 23, 2026, Regular Council meeting. In addition, your email will be shared with the Planning and Development Department.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your views with New Westminster City Council.

Regards,  
Sarah

**Sarah Goddard** | Assistant Corporate Officer

City of New Westminster | Legislative Services  
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9  
[www.newwestcity.ca](http://www.newwestcity.ca)

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**From:** weranewwest@gmail.com <weranewwest@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 9:18 AM  
**To:** Mayor and Councillors <mayorandcouncillors@newwestcity.ca>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] FW: 502 20th street housing project

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of New Westminster's network. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

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Good morning. This project is on the agenda for tonight's council meeting. Please consider the concerns of the residents who live in that area. The concerns about drug use should be taken seriously based on official document that I attached specifically:

**5. Will alcohol or drug use be permitted in the site?**

- We will not deny this transitional housing to people who may use substances. If residents choose to use substances onsite, the housing operator follows a harm-reduction approach and can connect residents to mental health and substance use recovery services. Thank you for addressing the concerns of the residents and businesses in the area.

Gavin McLeod  
Secretary Treasurer  
WERA New Westminster

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**From:** Barb Quon S22(1) Personal Information  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 8:50 AM  
**To:** [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org)  
**Cc:** [weranewwest@gmail.com](mailto:weranewwest@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** 502 20th street housing project

As a resident of River Drive where your project is planned to go ahead with no conciliation is frankly unacceptable ( we pay taxes too ) Your choice to put this project on a dead end street doesn't make sense? This means they will be walking down our lane leaving garbage and drugs. What about the children on this street? which have to walk to school. My daughter is already scared to walk my granddaughter in the morning. There is already garbage on our walkway the city can't clean up, who is going to monitor what these people do in our lane and pick up their mess.

While this project is necessary it should be built somewhere else like the old Canfor property that borderlines Coquitlam. Not in a dead end residential street. The Canfor property is away from residential and has easy access to Royal Columbian hospital where some may end up on a weekly basis, We don't want ambulance and police cars running down our street. It is going to cause a ton of traffic as well. We have had problems with the homeless down here already lighting fires and stealing our property. The police will be called all the time and using their time for this kind of thing is a waste of time and money.

We won't even be able to go for a walk around the block anymore. The boys down the street ride their bikes around and around the block, The kids already don't have not enough space down here to play. Where do your children play? beside drug addicts.....

You are essentially keeping us from using our street anymore. the impact for the children down here is unacceptable.

Who on earth came up with this location it's bad, it's wrong and its a bad judgement call on BC housing's part.

I will contact the news to shine a spotlight on what is proposed by BC housing down here

especially being told this is going to happen with no say. Because if they can do this here they can do it anywhere.

I mean what a way to ruin a small neighborhood to cause us more anxiety and stress. Do we not matter???

Regards, Barb Quon  
Resident of River Drive

cc. Tasha Henderson, City Councilor  
cc Dave Guiney, Senior Planning Analyst

## COMMUNITYFAQ

### Transitional Housing with Supports (Tiny Home Village)

502 Twentieth Street, New Westminster

February 2026

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#### 1. What is housing with supports?

- Housing with supports provides urgently needed transitional housing and embedded support services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- This project is funded through the Province's Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) program. Through this program, we work with municipalities to build and offer housing quickly to those who need it most. This modular housing stays in place for a period of several years while we continue to build more permanent, purpose-designed supportive homes in the community.
- Many residents are people who have been staying in shelters long-term and have been waiting to access a permanent home. This, in turn, frees up shelter spaces for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and/or living in encampments

#### 2. Who would live in these homes?

- Residents will be adults (19+) from the local area who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and need support services to become more independent and transition into more permanent housing.
- All residents apply to live in the transitional housing, sign program agreements which outline behavioural expectations, and pay rent.
- BC Housing uses a community-based process to offer homes to people based on their individual needs and supports available. This process helps ensure residents are set up for success and more likely to remain housed

#### 3. What security measures will be in place?

- BC Housing Design and Construction Standards apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices in all building projects. This includes security measures such as fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, strict guest and visitor policies, security cameras, and lighting.
- The building will have a minimum of two trained staff on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Residents will be supported and any concerns will be addressed in a timely manner.
- BC Housing and our non-profit staff commit to working with housing residents and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any safety concerns quickly and

collaboratively.

- We will share a direct phone number for the project with neighbours when it is available.

#### **4. Will the project cause safety and security issues in the neighbourhood?**

- Affordable and supportive housing are an important part of community safety. Having safe, accessible and low-barrier housing in a community means there are fewer people sheltering outdoors. This increases people's personal safety and well-being and contributes to community safety overall.
- Residents will sign and be expected to abide by a program participant agreement. This agreement includes a crime-free addendum, and addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behaviour, especially as it relates to the health and safety of residents and others in the community.
- BC Housing and our non-profit partners are committed to being good neighbours. We also work openly with those who are best able to address safety issues beyond our housing sites. These include bylaw, law enforcement, or other emergency services for whom public safety is their mandate.

#### **5. Will alcohol or drug use be permitted in the site?**

- We will not deny this transitional housing to people who may use substances. If residents choose to use substances onsite, the housing operator follows a harm-reduction approach and can connect residents to mental health and substance use recovery services.
- Harm reduction is an important life-saving health care practice, especially in the current toxic drug crisis. People using substances alone or outside does not benefit communities and often leads to tragic outcomes. Learn more about the importance of harm reduction and how it works by visiting [Fraserhealth.ca](https://fraserhealth.ca).
- Stable housing is crucial in a person's health journey, including recovery from substance use disorders. After a person who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being, including accessing health care such as substance use treatments.

#### **6. Who is going to be responsible for keeping the facility/area clean?**

- BC Housing and the future operator would be committed to being good neighbours. Both staff and residents will work to keep the property maintained with a daily clean-up.
- If neighbours observe cleanliness issues on the housing property, we encourage them to contact the operator directly.
- We would share a direct phone number for the housing operator with neighbours when it is available. We would also continue working with residents, staff and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any concerns about cleanliness on the property.
- The City of New Westminster would work with the operator to maintain cleanliness in public spaces and within public amenities through waste collection, maintenance and enforcement of sanitation regulations where applicable. City bylaws and programs would apply to this area, similar to other private property.

Schedule 2 to the  
Minutes of the Regular  
Council Meeting held  
on February 23, 2026

**ON TABLE**  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 23, 2026  
Re: Item 3.2

**From:** [Mayor and Councillors](#)  
**To:** "Alice Millar"  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Tiny Homes Village: Transitional Housing, 502 Twentieth Street, New Westminster - for 30  
**Date:** Monday, February 23, 2026 4:10:51 PM

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Hello,

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your email. Your correspondence will be forwarded to the Mayor and each Councillor, and will form part of the public record of the February 23, 2026 Regular Council meeting. In addition, your email will be shared with the Planning and Development Department.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your views with New Westminster City Council.

Regards,  
Sarah

**Sarah Goddard** | Assistant Corporate Officer

City of New Westminster | Legislative Services  
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9  
[www.newwestcity.ca](http://www.newwestcity.ca)

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**From:** Alice Millar S22(1) Personal Information  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 3:11 PM  
**To:** Mayor and Councillors <mayorandcouncillors@newwestcity.ca>; weranewwest <weranewwest@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Tiny Homes Village: Transitional Housing, 502 Twentieth Street, New Westminster - for 30

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Dear Mayor and City Councillors

I see that you have added to your city council meeting tonight to receive information from BC Housing about a "Tiny Homes Village: Transitional Housing" project for 502 Twentieth Street at River Drive, New Westminster.

This is a Heavy Industrial lot/zoning. It is not residential.

Did you know about this project before I recently contacted Tasha Henderson, City Council, and the West End Residence Association. We recently received a letter from BC Housing about this project. They did not survey our area about this.

The residents of River Drive are against this project at this location. We have young elementary school age children, as well as seniors, handicapped and other special needs living here along with our pets. The risk for drugs and additional threat of crime are adding too much stress to us. We want to keep our area safe and crime free.

We do not want 30 homeless plus guests using our residential street and lane to access this project. There could be drug use and using "dial a dope" to get drugs and that would involve cars racing through our neighbourhood. We had a flop house down here for many years (policeman's description). That was S22(1) Personal Information next to my home. I observed many dial a dope transactions and the cars racing down our River Drive and also lane. We should not be subjected to this again. It was shocking to see drug use behind my home. The police did nothing about the flop house or the dial a dope situation. The police will only get involved after the fact, so negative interactions are a real possibility. It was only last week I saw a situation with approximately 5 police officers and their cars blocking Stewardson Way at River Drive as they interacted with what I suspect was a mentally ill man who was moving violently. Could he have been from the homeless camp? Then an ambulance was on its way. These types of interactions put our police officers at risk.

I have also contacted the city several times about the garbage on 21st Street at River Drive, behind a locked metal gate. I suspect it is all coming from the homeless camp up in a hidden back area above River Drive and below Stewardson/Marine Way and 22nd Street. Unknown number of homeless in that camp. They seem to enter at a whole cut in the fence along Stewardson/Marine Way where the big cross is painted on a cement pillar. A few years ago I contacted Mayor and Council about that homeless camp and the big fire that happened. Mayor Johnstone replied, that it was up to the province, and therefore not his problem. City Councillor Tasha Henderson was the only City Councillor to reply to me, which I appreciated. After the fire I was hoping that the homeless would move to another area as they burnt it down. They are still there, including their garbage dumping site on the city street of 21st Street at River Drive. The clean up should involve HazMat equipment and trained staff.

I hope you will be able to convince BC Housing that it is an inappropriate location as it will negatively impact the tax paying residents of River Drive. I vote too.

Regards, Mrs Alice Millar, S22(1) Personal Information River Drive, New Westminster

Schedule 3 to the  
Minutes of the Regular  
Council Meeting held  
February 23, 2026

**ON TABLE**  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 23, 2026  
Re: Item 4.6

**From:** [Legislative Services](#)  
**To:** "Jesse Clark"  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Support For Vulnerable Buildings Assessment (Agenda Item 4.6)  
**Date:** Monday, February 23, 2026 4:15:27 PM

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Hello,

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your email. Your correspondence will be forwarded to the Mayor and each Councillor, and will form part of the public record of the February 23, 2026 Regular Council meeting. In addition, your email will be shared with the Energy and Climate Action Department.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your views with New Westminster City Council.

Regards,  
Sarah

**Sarah Goddard** | Assistant Corporate Officer

City of New Westminster | Legislative Services  
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9  
[www.newwestcity.ca](http://www.newwestcity.ca)

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**From:** Jesse Clark S22(1) Personal Information  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 4:13 PM  
**To:** External-Legislative Services <CorporateOfficer@newwestcity.ca>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Support For Vulnerable Buildings Assessment (Agenda Item 4.6)

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A Wonderful Afternoon to You!

I hope it's treating you well!

I would like to express my huge, grateful support for (tonight's Council meeting item 4.6) Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Pathway One – City-Funded Cooling Assessments for Rental Buildings.

I regret that I cannot attend tonight's meeting -- and I realize the timing of this email may preclude some or all Councillors from seeing it prior to the meeting -- but I am compelled to share my thoughts here, with hopes they may be helpful at some point (if not tonight).

I am grateful to have lived and worked in New Westminster for over two decades, always in an apartment -- most of that in the same unit of an aging building in the Brow of the Hill neighborhood. As extreme weather increases in frequency and severity, I am very aware of the need for effective heating and cooling for myself and (especially) my neighbours. It is a giant issue for individual, public and financial health -- moreso with each passing day.

I want to thank you for this fantastic initiative and lend it my grateful support, both in general, and -- should it be helpful -- in any specific way I can, including facilitating in any way I am able if you would like to investigate my building as a potential retrofit candidate. This is not a request, simply a recognition of the massive merit of the initiative, and my desire to support it in any way I can, including finding suitable buildings. I am proud of the thoughtful, effective way my Council operates, and I trust that you will move forward in an excellent way -- and if I can support that work here, fantastic.

In any case, thank you again for all your work keeping New Westminster a place I am proud to live and work.

All the best, with gratitude,  
Jesse Clark

V3M 1L6

Schedule 4 to the  
Minutes of the Regular  
Council Meeting held on  
February 23, 2026

**ON TABLE**  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 23, 2026  
Re: Item 7.1

**From:** [Mayor and Councillors](#)  
**To:** "Nathan Davidowicz"  
**Subject:** RE: [EXTERNAL] Queensborough School Bus Program  
**Date:** Monday, February 23, 2026 10:04:10 AM

---

Hello,

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your email. Your correspondence will be forwarded to the Mayor and each Councillor, and will form part of the public record of the February 23, 2026, Regular Council meeting. In addition, your email will be shared with the Planning and Development Department.

Please note that this item is on the agenda today for notice only. The item will be on the agenda for Council consideration on March 9, 2026.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your views with New Westminster City Council.

Regards,  
Sarah

**Sarah Goddard** | Assistant Corporate Officer

City of New Westminster | Legislative Services  
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9  
[www.newwestcity.ca](http://www.newwestcity.ca)

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**From:** Nathan Davidowicz **S22(1) Personal Information**  
**Sent:** Monday, February 23, 2026 9:51 AM  
**To:** Mayor and Councillors <mayorandcouncillors@newwestcity.ca>  
**Cc:** ECC.Minister@gov.bc.ca; DM.Education@gov.bc.ca; info@sd40.bc.ca  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Queensborough School Bus Program

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Dear Mayor and Council:

Queensborough School Bus Program

I support better school transportation and the Notice of Motion on your February 22, 2026 agenda.

I have the following comments:

1. Many students in Greater Vancouver spend lots of time and money travelling to/from schools.

In some cases up to 90 minutes one way with up to 4 different TransLink bus routes.

2. Municipalities and School Districts in Greater Vancouver North of the Fraser River are not members of ASTSBC

[The Association of School Transportation Services of B.C..](https://astsbc.org/)

<https://astsbc.org/>

3. There are about 1800 special yellow school buses in BC about 70% operated by school districts and the rest by third party private companies.

3. The BC government has taken out school transportation requirements out of the SCHOOL ACT in the early 2000s by former Minister Christy Clark.

4. Lots of money is being wasted by having 60 school districts in BC.

Need to amalgamate many of them in the same way the Health Authorities were amalgamated..

Yours Truly

Nathan Davidowicz

7.1 Queensborough School Bus Program Submitted by Councillor Fontaine and Councillor Minhas:

WHEREAS over 230 Queensborough based students and their families rely on the Queensborough bus service to enable students to attend New Westminster Secondary School in a safe, secure and timely manner, without which journeys take three times as long and students are often passed over by overcrowded buses causing them to arrive late or not at all; and WHEREAS a pilot service launched in January 2024 at cost to parents is slated to end on June 30, 2026 despite a campaign promise made on October 8, 2024 that if the NDP government were re-elected, this service would be made 'permanent and free'; and WHEREAS New Westminster is the second most dense city in Canada, with only one high school, and the acceptance of this density should have already unlocked new funding from senior orders of government;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Mayor be requested to write to our three government and opposition MLAs asking they advocate to secure the necessary provincial funding to ensure the Queensborough school bus program becomes 'free and permanent' as previously promised;

and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Mayor write to the Minister of Education and Child Care requesting that additional funding be granted to School District 40 for the Queensborough school bus service to continue and be made permanent (beyond June 30, 2026) and without cost to local families until such time as a new high school is built in the

Queensborough community

# S22(1) Personal Information



-

**From:** Scott Hamilton <[s.22\(1\) personal information](#)>  
**Date:** February 23, 2026 at 12:29:22 PM PST  
**To:** Paul Minhas <[pminhas@newwestcity.ca](mailto:pminhas@newwestcity.ca)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] The Herbco Chronology

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Hi Paul -

Thank you again for taking the time to give me a call. As part of the discussion, I thought I would forward you a chronology of our involvement in the Sapperton cannabis application process.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Chers

Scott

Scott Hamilton  
[s.22\(1\) personal information](#)

## 1. Initial City Recommendation

Herb Co received the **highest evaluation score in Sapperton and the highest overall score in the City of New Westminster** during the municipal cannabis retail selection process.

Following the City's review process, Herb Co was formally recommended as the successful candidate for the location.

---

## 2. Investor Change & Provincial Application Delay

After receiving the City's recommendation, Herb Co was required to change investors.

The new investor required additional time to complete documentation required for the provincial cannabis retail application.

As a result:

- The Province rescinded Herb Co's application.
  - This was **not a refusal on the merits**.
  - The rescission occurred solely due to timing and documentation requirements.
  - Herb Co was eligible to reapply once the new investor's documents were complete.
- 

### **3. Location Awarded to Second-Ranked Applicant**

Following the provincial rescission, the City awarded the Sapperton location to the **second-highest scoring applicant, North Root**.

---

### **4. Lease Issues & Third-Party Application**

North Root did not secure a proper lease for the approved location.

Subsequently, a new company, Marigold Cannabis, applied to the City for a cannabis retail location within the same zoning area.

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### **5. Marigold Refused by Province**

Marigold Cannabis was refused by the Province.

---

### **6. North Root Applies to Relocate**

North Root later applied to relocate to a different site.

---

### **7. Continued Lease & Communication Issues**

At the new proposed location, North Root:

- Did not secure a proper lease.
  - Has not responded to the City for several months.
  - Has not advanced the application toward a viable operating position.
-

## 8. Herb Co would like to Reapplies

Herb Co — the original highest-scoring and City-recommended applicant — has agreed with the landlord on a **conditional lease at a properly zoned cannabis retail location within the Sapperton area of City of New Westminster** and intends to formally reapply to the City.

Herb Co has:

- Made a **substantial financial investment** during the original application process, including professional fees, architectural planning, and regulatory preparation.
  - Resolved the prior investor documentation issue that led to the procedural rescission of the provincial application.
  - Since been **approved by the Province of British Columbia to operate a cannabis retail location in Vancouver**, demonstrating regulatory compliance, operational capability, and provincial confidence in the ownership and management structure.
- 

## Summary of Position

- Herb Co was the **original highest-ranked and City-recommended applicant**.
- The prior provincial rescission was procedural, not substantive.
- Subsequent applicants have faced lease deficiencies, provincial refusal, or inactivity.
- Herb Co now meets municipal zoning requirements and provincial regulatory standards.
- Herb Co remains ready, willing, and able to proceed in a timely and compliant manner.

Schedule 6 to the Minutes  
of the Regular Council  
Meeting held on February  
23, 2026

**ON TABLE**  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 23, 2026  
Re: Item 8.1

Good evening.

I am Gurmel Kainth. I own the property at 416 East Columbia Street.

You will understand that it is a real challenge to get good tenants for business premises in Sapperton. I thought I had a potential good tenant with North Root Cannabis. I went through the rezoning process. It turned out that the operator of North Root was not honest with me, and I then refused to rent to him. He sued me. We had a summary trial in Supreme Court. In the trial he filed an affidavit admitting that he had lied to me. No surprise, he did not win.

In the meantime, I applied to the City for a change of operator. I followed all the steps required by the City. So did the new operator, including a full submission binder and an interview with the planning department. Building permits were issued.

The new operator is Marigolds Cannabis. It already operates a licensed store in Vancouver, so we know that it is real and that it is serious. Marigolds is ready to go.

And now the City says it may revoke my zoning. Why? I have done nothing wrong. Why am I being turned into a victim here?

Please consider the fairness of this. First point, this is no longer about North Root Cannabis or its operator. The provincial licensing application of North Root was cancelled over a year ago. Fact is, the province doesn't allow an application to transfer to a different location. And you can't have a cannabis store without a provincial license. And even if it could have transferred to a new location, North Root couldn't secure a new location, not even when the City staff offered to help. North Root is no longer a consideration.

Secondly, if you revoke my zoning, there will be no possibility of a cannabis store at any other location in Sapperton. Fact is, after the 2018



applications, no other property owner has sought zoning for retail cannabis. And there will be no new process for applications for a long time. If you revoke my zoning you are being unfair to me, and you are acting 100% contrary to the City's stated priorities.

Please remember, the City chose priorities in 2018. One of those priorities was to have a cannabis store in Sapperton. If you revoke my zoning, you are going exactly against your own priorities. This makes no sense.

Finally, I ask you think about fairness. I gave up a stable, long term tenant to make this happen. Marigolds has already invested heavily in the opportunity. Taking away the zoning is unfair to both me and Marigolds. We have done nothing to deserve this.

And please consider the reputation of the City. Taking away zoning for no reason would not help with the City's efforts to make itself into a business friendly community.

For all these reasons, I ask that you please vote to keep the retail cannabis zoning at 416 East Columbia Street.

Thank you

**S22(1) Personal Information**



FOCUS POINTS:

ZONING FOR 416 EAST COLUMBIA STREET

FRAMEWORK

1. Zoning, provincial licensing, and city business license are 3 separate concepts. It is important to recognize the distinctions.
2. Zoning goes with the land. In the case of cannabis retail zoning, it required the owner to apply for zoning, the City to hold a public hearing, and Council to vote in favour of the zoning. All 3 steps took place for 416 East Columbia Street. Once zoning was granted, any operator could operate a cannabis store there if they had a provincial license and a City business license for retail cannabis sales.
3. Provincial retail cannabis licensing is applied for by the operator and is granted only after a thorough vetting of the operator and the proposed location, including that the location has appropriate zoning. Once granted, the provincial license is that of the operator. The proposed operator at 416 East Columbia Street already operates a licensed retail cannabis store, so there is no issue about provincial licensing.
4. The City business license is applied for and held by the operator. It is granted by the City only if the location is appropriately zoned, the province has approved the operator for licensing, and the City approves the operator for a business license. Gurmel Kainth, the owner of 416 East Columbia Street, applied to the City for a change of operator in December, 2021. That application was accepted by the City and the proposed operator fully complied with the Planning Department requests for support materials and participation in an interview.

SIMILAR SITUATION

The original winning applicant at 710 12th Street was a company named Cannoe. It never opened any store there. The operator was subsequently changed to the current operator Bohemian Cannabis, which operates there today.

It is clear that the City processed and approved a change of operator there. The situation was functionally identical to the situation with 416 East Columbia Street. Whatever the reasons why Cannoe did not proceed at 710 12th Street, there was no suggestion of removing the retail cannabis zoning there. Instead, a change of operator was permitted by the City.

In other words, this exact situation has already been dealt with by the City, without any suggestion of taking away the zoning from the location. This shows a clear precedent which should guide the City with respect to 416 East Columbia Street.

This is a matter of both procedural fairness and of fairness to the property owner. Please bear in mind that Mr Kainth gave up a long term tenant in the full expectation of being able to lease the property to a licensed retail cannabis store.

## POLICY AND REPUTATION

The City made a clear set of policy decisions in 2018 in advance of cannabis legalization. Those included to have one store in each of 5 zones. One of those zones was Sapperton. There were only ever three applicants for this zone. The other two locations are not currently available. If the zoning is revoked from 416 East Columbia Street, there will be no property zoned for cannabis retail in Sapperton, nor will there be any prospects of there being a cannabis store there in the reasonably foreseeable future. It follows that revocation of the retail cannabis zoning at 416 East Columbia Street would be entirely contrary to the policy decision of the City in 2018.

The City must also consider its reputation within the business community if it is seen to be revoking zoning without cause. New Westminster has made significant efforts to attract new businesses, thereby providing a stronger tax base, good local jobs, and services to meet the needs and desires of its community. On the one hand, maintaining the zoning will enhance those purposes. On the other hand, revoking the zoning will both defeat those purposes and diminish the prospects of other businesses being prepared to invest their time and resources into the City.

## CONCLUSION

In all of the circumstances, the only proper conclusion is that the the City maintain the retail cannabis zoning at 416 East Columbia Street.

## ADDENDUM

The discussion in the course of the Council meeting of February 9, 2026 disclosed some incorrect assumptions and propositions.

Firstly, it was suggested that the City previously intended to revoke the retail cannabis licensing at 416 East Columbia Street, so it should follow through with that now. Whatever one might think of that earlier position, it was a decision which was made in entirely different circumstances.

In the earlier situation, North Root Cannabis had a pending provincial application for retail cannabis licensing. The City then believed that North Root Cannabis would be able to secure another location in Sapperton, and thus that a switch of zoning to that location would advance the 2018 policy objectives of the City, which included to have one retail cannabis store in Sapperton. That is not the situation now. Since that time, North Root Cannabis had its provincial licensing application cancelled. Further, North Root Cannabis was unable to secure a lease at any other location in Sapperton. Finally, the principal of North Root Cannabis did not even

respond to the efforts of City staff to help it find another location. Whatever the reasons, North Root Cannabis is no longer a consideration; it will not ever open a retail cannabis store in Sapperton.

In other words, the change of zoning, as earlier considered, may have advanced the City's 2018 policies. Now, the removal of zoning at 416 East Columbia Street would result in there being no possibility of any retail cannabis store in Sapperton, which is precisely contrary to those same policies.

Therefore, while the revocation of zoning at 416 East Columbia Street, and granting of zoning to another location in Sapperton, could then be seen to make some sense, it now makes no sense at all.

Secondly, and with the greatest of respect to Councillor McEvoy, there is no way to advance less restrictive retail cannabis zoning by revoking zoning which has already been granted. Nor are we dealing with a situation in which a potential landlord holding anyone hostage due to the limited zoning. The reality is that no operator will agree to rents which do not leave room to run a viable business. This is simply not an issue.

Finally, a suggestion arose that leaving the zoning in place at 416 East Columbia Street might be unfair to other property owners who might be interested in obtaining retail cannabis zoning. This ignores the reality that, in the 2018 application process, only 3 property owners in Sapperton were sufficiently interested in such zoning to have applicants file applications for retail cannabis at their premises. And only one of those property owners is open to Council's consideration now. The plain fact is, there is no basis for concern about property owners who never expressed any prior interest, and there are real reasons to be concerned for the one property owner who stands to be negatively impacted by revocation of his zoning.

Thank you for your consideration of this. Please do not hesitate ask any questions, and please do not hesitate to share this with any of the other Council members.

# Memorandum

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**To:** Mayor and Councillors **Date:** February 23, 2026

**From:** Shehzad Somji, Director, Finance

**Re:** Budget 2026 and 2026–2030 Five-Year Financial Plan Public Comments

## Purpose

To provide Council the public comments received on the 2026 – 2030 Five-Year Financial Plan.

## Summary

The Draft 2026 – 2030 Five Year Financial Plan was presented to Council at the February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Council meeting for three readings. Prior to presenting the Bylaw for adoption, the Five-Year financial plan is made available for the community to provide comment. The comment period was open from February 10<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026 on the City's Budget 2026 webpage.

## Discussion

The City received 6 submissions with comments or questions from 6 community members, which are included along with staff responses.

1. Received from Trudi Goels via email on Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the city's 5 year budget.

As someone who owns property in New Westminster, it is no surprise to me that I pay property tax in order to fund the needs of all residents. I budget for an annual tax increase as I understand the costs of goods and services go up and this is the primary way that municipalities raise funds.

It is also the tax I am most happy to pay. The contribution I make improves the quality of life for me and for my neighbours. It is the tax that stays where it is collected and it isn't re-allocated. 100% of it comes back to residents in forms of city management and services. It is choosing to buy local and support my local economy.

I have one item I would like to offer for consideration, if not for this year, then maybe for future years. It is the way in which we fund our libraries.

Public libraries are well documented for providing a place of belonging, free education, democratic access to information, and positively impacting mental health, wellbeing, and social cohesion.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations notes that for every \$1 invested in Canada's urban libraries, \$6 is generated in community economic impact. Libraries support local businesses.

At the 2025 Union of B.C. Municipalities convention, delegates overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling on the province to more than double annual library funding to \$30 million, recognizing the positive impact that libraries have on our communities.

Libraries are vital and should be funded as such. One way we can consider how we fund libraries, is to tie the funding to the police budget increases. In this current budget recommendation, the New West public libraries will see an increase in their budget of 1% from 2026 to 2027, while the New West Police Department, will see a 4% increase. 4% for the public library would be in the ballpark of \$250,000. The compounding increases year over year will dramatically improve our library services in 5 years and beyond.

To meet the overarching strategic goals of the City of New Westminster, we need to thoroughly fund our libraries for increased demand, growth, and emerging opportunities.

Thank you for your work on this budget and for keeping the wellbeing of the residents of New Westminster front of mind.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your interest in the City's budget. The 2026 Library budget is inclusive of one-time initiatives that may be the continuation of senior government grant funded initiatives or approved one-time initiatives which are still in progress. Therefore, year-on-year comparison with future years may not be directly comparable and reflective of future service levels. The financial plan for future years is an indication of cost escalation estimates, and does not consider future investments which are to be deliberated during future budget processes.

2. Received from Sean Sallis-Lyon via email on Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026

I have reviewed the budget, and from what I can tell it looks fine, just as long as we continue to fund all the various projects we've previously promised. I want us to continue to take aggressive steps to improve our city's transportation



infrastructure, especially when it comes to walking and cycling. We have a great cycling plan in the works, one that just requires that we continually work at it.

Agnes Street is a great example of this. While at the moment, much of our cycling infrastructure is a bit temporary in nature, the Agnes Street cycling infrastructure is modern and well-built. We should aspire to have all our cycling infrastructure look like that, using the City of Victoria as a leading North American example.

The same goes for our vehicle infrastructure. I'd like to see far more roundabouts, especially in our more dense downtown corridors. Even more important than that, we are in desperate need for more raised crosswalks. Columbia Street is a good example of a street that needs this; all the side streets that intersect with Columbia should have raised crosswalks, as they not only slow drivers as they approach the intersection, they also make it much safer for pedestrians and cyclists (especially once we build physically separated bike lanes along this corridor).

As well, I want us to take steps to expand the downtown boardwalk further north-east, eventually connecting to the Brunette-Fraser regional greenway!

Anyway, I'm getting carried away here. The point is, please keep funding all our important capital projects, and don't cancel any of them. I love this city, and I want to see it continually improved, even if it means higher taxes. The best cities in the world tend to have high taxes, and for good reason; they can afford to build cool stuff. You're doing a great job so far, and I'm so excited to see what the city will look like 5-10 years from now.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your interest in the City's budget and capital investments. The City remains committed to deliver on transportation infrastructures along with other necessary investments within the Five-Year Capital Plan.

### 3. Received from Meredith Haaf via email on Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026

I am a New West resident submitting my feedback on the 2026 city budget. I continue to be disheartened by the disproportionately large amount of funds dedicated to policing services, particularly compared to community services and supports and the library.



The City of New Westminster is a safe city, with low overall crime rates. While public perceptions of crime may differ, those perceptions should not be driving use of public funds. The police do not prevent crime and they do not address what the public tends to perceive as criminality, including homelessness and seeing drug paraphernalia.

I hope the city reviews the budget from an evidence-informed lens.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your comments and your interest in the City's budget. We appreciate your input in the City's budget, and your feedback will be presented to Council for consideration.

#### 4. Received from Halena Seiferling via email on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2026 budget and the 5 year financial plan.

I am a somewhat new resident of New West, having moved here from Vancouver just over a year ago. My partner and I rent our apartment downtown, and have been enjoying getting to know both our neighbourhood and the city through new restaurants, businesses, parks, and more.

After reviewing the 2026 budget and five year financial plan, I am in support of the plan. I see that tax increases are always difficult, but we know that costs go up over time and taxes are the primary way that municipalities raise funds for vital day-to-day services and programs. And often, these services save costs in the long run by providing preventative care and support for folks.

I am happy to see projects within the five-year plan that focus on housing, transportation, safety, and the vibrancy of the local economy.

One recommendation I would make going forward is the ability for residents to give their feedback about the budget via an online consultation platform. It can be difficult and inaccessible for some folks to wade through long documents and analyze the changes over time. An online portal that asks about each section of



the budget, placing these in context of previous years and giving explanations for the changes, may be more helpful and easier for more folks to participate in this consultation period, and would also give more staff and Council a clear overview of the feedback on each section.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your comments and for your interest in the City's budget. We appreciate your input and value community engagement in our financial planning process. The City will be inviting the public to participate in an expanded public opinion opportunities for the coming budget year. This broader consultation typically occurs once every few years as part of our comprehensive budget planning and review process.

#### 5. Received from Rick Folka via email on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

##### Reserve Fund Usage and Capital Levy in 2026 Budget

###### Key Issues:

1. Heavy Reliance on Reserves: \$2.6M of the \$14.95M operating budget enhancements is funded by reserves, raising concerns about long-term sustainability.
2. New 1% Capital Levy: The city has introduced a 1% capital levy in this election year, which may raise questions about the rationale behind using reserves for operational expenses while increasing taxes for capital projects.
3. Future Tax Impact: Many reserve-funded programs are operational, requiring ongoing funding beyond 2026, potentially leading to property tax increases in 2027.
4. Transparency Concerns: Limited communication on the rationale for reserve usage and the new levy may lead to public skepticism, especially during an election year.

###### Recommendations:

1. Plan for Sustainability: Transition reserve-funded programs to stable funding sources to avoid future financial strain and clarify how the capital levy will be utilized.
2. Improve Transparency: Clearly communicate the purpose of the capital levy and reserve usage, addressing public concerns about financial management.
3. Evaluate Reserve Allocations: Ensure reserve funds are used appropriately and do not compromise future capital needs.



Conclusion: The introduction of a 1% capital levy alongside significant reserve usage raises questions about long-term financial planning and public trust. Management must prioritize sustainable funding strategies and transparent communication to ensure fiscal stability and accountability.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your comments and for your interest in the City's budget. The City remains committed to fiscal prudence and utilizing City reserves for investments in short-term, non-routine operational initiatives when financially feasible.

City reserves are proposed as a funding source for short-term, non-routine, temporary operational enhancements to ensure these initiatives do not create an ongoing tax burden for the community. This approach provides the flexibility to respond to immediate community needs using savings accumulated in prior fiscal years. Staff continuously evaluate the effectiveness and duration of these non-routine initiatives. Where there is a demonstrated and ongoing community need, permanent funding may be recommended through the regular budget process. When necessary, City reserves will also be proposed as a temporary transitional funding strategy to support non-routine but critical programs transitioning into permanent programs, and shifting from senior government or third-party funding to ongoing tax funding.

The introduction of the 1% capital levy was necessary to strengthen the City's financial resiliency and reduce long-term financial risk. Like many municipalities in Metro Vancouver, our City is faced with aging infrastructure along with cost escalations during renewals and upgrades. The capital levy helps reduce reliance on debt, external grants and contributions, and avoids deferring essential repairs and maintenance, which would result in higher costs in the future. The capital levy will be reported separately on the City's financial statements to provide full transparency.

#### 6. Received from Alan Leathem via email on Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

I have lived in this city seven years as a owner of a condo and in every one of those years this city has raised property taxes. NO attempt is made to raise taxes by the annual CPI. You use us as your piggy bank with no accountability.. . People are living on fixed incomes or those working are not getting 4.8% pay rises.



This city never seems to look for ways to reduce increases. Everything you touch you increase the price of like electric, hydro, sewer. You approve huge new towers on the water front but these eye sores do not seem to reduce taxes even with many more residents.

Maybe follow Vancouver's lead. 0% increase. Reduce the police it is a huge cost in the budget. Do a better job or the residents of this city will look to vote you out for more responsible fiscal managers. It's our money not yours.

Looking for a home in a better city with reasonable property taxes.

### Staff Response

Thank you for your comments and for your interest in the City's budget. While the City's property tax increase exceeds the headline Consumer Price Index (CPI), the City also faces cost escalations in areas not fully reflected in the CPI basket of goods and services. We appreciate your input in the City's budget, and your feedback will be presented to Council for consideration.

