

DRAFT Strategic Plan

City of Vancouver | May 2023



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Land Acknowledgement

Recognition of the residents who this plan reflects and serves.

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Welcome to all who live, work, and play in the city of Vancouver to our 2023-2029 Strategic Plan. This plan lays out the City’s direction for the next six years and beyond. Using our identified Core Values as a guide, we will advance efforts in each of the eight Focus Areas for the benefit of Vancouver residents, businesses, and visitors.

Vancouver is at an inflection point. We face many challenges, some local and others societal. We also have boundless opportunities to reshape our community in ways that make it more equitable, safe, and climate friendly. Vancouver is a city on the rise, within the region and the state. This plan will ensure that we preserve the unique traits that led us all to this place, while we continue to grow and evolve as a community.

This plan reflects the work of a dedicated group of community participants, along with the broader voices of Vancouver and City staff. We believe it to be a true reflection of the diverse perspectives and goals of Vancouver.

As a Council and City leadership, we are committed to ensuring alignment between future policies, programs, and investments and the core values and focus areas of the Strategic Plan. The use of six-year performance measures and long-term community indicators will allow us all to track our communities progress and ensure we’re moving in the right direction.

We hope you share our excitement for the Vancouver we are becoming and will join us in ensuring the values we have created are realized.



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Introduction

The 2023 Strategic Plan lays out city priorities for the next six years, through 2029. The Plan is built on core values and focus areas affirmed by the City Council and work previously completed through A Stronger Vancouver, the 2016 Strategic Plan, and community engagement efforts. Vancouver’s Strategic Plan will be used to prioritize and fund a broad range of services related to transportation, housing, economic development, environmental resources, parks and recreation, culture, governance, and public safety.

Why do we need a Strategic Plan?

Vancouver’s Strategic Plan helps the City understand what to prioritize and invest in. The Plan reminds City Council and staff of what’s important to the community and reflects the city’s values, hopes, and dreams for the future.

How does the Strategic Plan fit into other planning processes?



Core Values

In 2021, Council identified five core values for Vancouver: livability, equity and inclusion, innovation, sustainability and resiliency, and community trust and relationships. The core values guide a vision for engaging with the public and help reimagine City structures, practices, and policies.



Livability – Livability is about supply and access to necessities, quality of life, requirements, and experiences that everyone in Vancouver expects.

Livability means that every resident and cultural group can live in the community with a sense of belonging and pride while maintaining their own values, beliefs, and identities.



Not all Vancouver residents and cultural groups experience the same level of livability. Bias and negative experiences of communities of color, people with disabilities, and other historically disadvantaged populations create a lack of connection between communities. Some groups are forced to alter or hide their beliefs, identities, or values. Many residents struggle with housing instability that includes a lack of safe affordable housing. Other residents lack adequate access to physical, mental, or behavioral health resources. Some communities experience elevated crime rates, including violence. Investments in public safety have disparate impacts across communities.

A livable Vancouver means:

- Access to clean and safe housing that is affordable for all socioeconomic statuses
- Clean public spaces, sidewalks, and streets
- Being safe and feeling comfortable in public spaces and places
- Not exposed to crime, violence, or discrimination
- Public spaces that feel welcoming to people of all ages and abilities
- Abundant opportunity to access and engage in core community resources including natural resources, transportation, health care, education, cultural experiences, and art
- Fair, transparent, and inclusive processes for economic improvement opportunities
- Ensuring accessible, inclusive, and sustainable access to resources and opportunities for those with disabilities
- A city that nurtures and values people of all ages, nationality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and religion
- Education-to-employment support for youth, especially those with barriers to employment
- A city that is free of groups that promote hate and violence



Equity and inclusion - An equitable and inclusive Vancouver is one where everyone feels a sense of belonging and can feel safe expressing their

beliefs and values. It is a community that provides access to opportunities, so everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. A Vancouver where other perspectives are heard with compassion and an open mind, that celebrates and recognizes diverse people, activities, and cultures. Ultimately, it means that every culture feels respected, and the elements of livability are accessible to all regardless of age, race, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religious opinions or affiliations, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, pregnancy, marital status, family status, mental or physical disability, military status, status as a veteran or any other protected status under applicable law. It means everyone has equal opportunities because the City is investing in and valuing outcomes for everyone.

An equitable Vancouver means:

- Fair, transparent, and inclusive processes for economic improvement opportunities
- Ensuring accessible, inclusive, and sustainable access to resources and opportunities for those with disabilities
- Nurturing and valuing people of all ages, nationality, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, and religion



This vision is not the current reality for many of Vancouver's communities. Class disparities exist where those with wealth and resources have what they need, and many others lack access to basic needs, including housing, health care, and transportation. These communities carry the burden of poverty because of systemic racism and prejudice and feel unwelcome, unappreciated, undervalued, and unsafe. Equity and inclusion demand that the City account for differential impacts to Vancouver's diverse populations and eliminate barriers for communities of color, religious minorities, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and other disadvantaged communities.



Innovation - An innovative Vancouver is one that invites and encourages creative thinking. This means calculating risk and finding solutions that promote well-being and improve lives. Innovation can show up in technological solutions, programs, infrastructure investments, climate change, and business approaches that ensure Vancouver is a desirable place to open a new business and to bring new jobs to the region.

An innovative Vancouver means:

- Finding new methods and solutions to old problems
- Using creative problem solving to fulfill needs
- Adapting to change
- Actively pursuing new opportunities
- Inviting creative communities to thrive
- Committing to collaboration
- Collecting, processing, and analyzing data, then acting on insights



Vancouver continues to be a city at a crossroads. Innovation can be prevented by satisfaction with the status quo, resistance to change, and rigid procedures and processes. Political divisiveness impacts the ability to be bold and act together. Being an innovative city means creatively investing financial resources to solve the challenges of the day and to set a vision for the future.



Sustainability and resiliency - A sustainable and resilient Vancouver values long term solutions, and includes crisis

management for economic, environmental, and social issues. It seeks to build structures to last in harmony with nature and ensures environmental justice for all Vancouver communities so that everyone can live in a safe, healthy environment. Communities benefit from high quality infrastructure, robust communications, and an emergency response system that helps everyone in the city prepare, respond, and recover from natural disasters and economic harms in a new and better way.

A sustainable and resilient Vancouver means:

- Protecting water, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maintaining tree canopies, ecosystem services, and biodiversity
- Crisis management regarding economic, environment and social issues
- Increasing nature-based solutions
- Integrated and interacting plans, processes, and systems
- Using a proactive and goal-oriented approach
- Handling an influx of visitors while minimizing impacts to everyday routines
- Building codes and land-use planning that ensures integrity of infrastructure
- Learning from past experiences and taking in new information



The City has a role in supporting understanding about sustainability and environmental initiatives to combat some of what gets in the way, including misinformation and uncertainty about the roles individual and the jurisdiction when responding to challenges. While difficult to operate through change and disruption, the City needs to build

more community support, be willing to own and acknowledge existing and future issues and allocate funding to programs and initiatives that respond to emergencies and meet the needs of the future.



Trust and relationships - A

trusting community is reflected by transparent decision-making processes, open communication

between the government and the community, and a broadly shared belief that decisions are intended to enhance livability, equity, and the resilience of the entire community. There is a belief that the government is representative of all communities. Vancouver communities believe that building trust leads to an engaged community of government, business, and residents that actively support and participate in carrying out City initiatives.



Trust in policing and law enforcement is critical to community trust and safety. In

Vancouver, crime, and fear of crime in communities, erodes trust in law enforcement and government in general. A history of exclusive rather than inclusive political processes inhibit the belief that the City acts in the best interest of everyone.

Failure to agree and deliver on broad community improvement initiatives further reduces public trust. Vancouver's vision is to have a city where residents and officials have trusting relationships.

A trusting Vancouver means:

- Strong partnerships and community engagement
- City leaders that follow through on actions, policies, and commitments
- Equitable treatment in City processes and equity in outcomes
- Communities that treat each other in ways they want to be treated
- A government that demonstrates openness and provides accurate and unambiguous information
- Respect for common spaces
- A government that ensures adequate representation in decision making and minimizes barriers to engagement
- Successful interactions in challenging circumstances
- Humility, fairness, openness, kindness, and honesty is demonstrated between communities and between communities and government
- Frequent and intentional interaction from city leaders

Vancouver Profile – Who We Are

History

Located between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains, on the north bank of the Columbia River, Vancouver is known for its natural beauty and high quality of life. Prior to the establishment of the Hudson’s Bay Company post in 1824, the area was occupied by many Native Americans, including Chinook, Cowlitz, and Klickitat tribes.¹ The City of Vancouver was incorporated in 1857 and grew to Washington’s fourth largest city, with a 2021 population of 190,915 people.^{2,3}

Demographics⁴



190,915
Residents



48.0%
Male



51.1%
Female



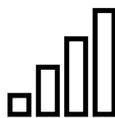
37
Median Age



22%
Population under 18



47%
Population under 35



\$63,617/year
Median household income



48%
Of residents rent their home



52%
Of residents own their home

¹ National Park Service. N.D. Vancouver National Historic Reserve Cultural Landscape Report.

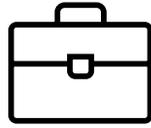
<http://npshistory.com/publications/fova/clr.pdf>

² John Caldbick. 2009. Washington Territorial Legislature incorporates the City of Vancouver on January 23, 1857.

HistoryLink.org. <https://www.historylink.org/File/9115>.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census of Population and Housing, updated every 10 years. [Decennial Census by Decades](#)

⁴ Vancouver, Washington Annual Report. <https://www.vancouverannualreport.org/numbers>.



96.5%
Employment rate



91%
Have a high school diploma



29.2%
Hold a bachelor's degree



12.7%
Live in poverty



9.7%
Live with a disability



6.1%
Are veterans

31%
of high schoolers (Vancouver
and Evergreen) identify as
LGBTQ+

Strategic Planning Process

The City of Vancouver is committed to developing a Strategic Plan that aligns with community values and hopes for the future. From 2020 to 2023, the project team attended Council workshops and retreats, conducted interviews with community-based organizations and partners, convened a 16-person advisory committee, and engaged the public through the visioning process to learn about priorities for the future. The project team also worked closely with City staff to ensure that the proposed strategic outcomes and metrics are realistic and align with other planning efforts.

Council

The project team met with Council throughout the process to provide updates on the Strategic Plan Advisory Committee and Strategic Plan.

- March 2020 – Council workshop
- January 2021 – Council retreat
- April 2021 – Council workshop
- February 2022 – Council retreat
- February 2022 – Council workshop

- April 2022 – Council memo
- April 2023 – Council meeting
- May 2023 – Council workshop

Interviews with Interested Parties

The project team conducted 15 interviews with internal and external stakeholders between December 2021 and January 2022. Interviews focused on understanding of the Strategic Plan and desired outcomes for the Strategic Plan update.

Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

The Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) was convened to:

- Support community outreach and listening.
- Improve communications between a diversity of community members and City.
- Identify and reflect on community needs, concerns, and opportunities.
- Guide how the Strategic Plan will collect data and measure progress towards goals.

SPAC members met throughout 2022 and 2023 in large and small groups to define the core values and focus areas, and to provide input on metrics for the Strategic Plan.

Public Engagement

During 2022, City staff engaged the Vancouver community across a wide range of projects, programs and initiatives related to the Strategic Plan. These efforts have involved:

Housing

- Affordable Housing Fund
- Affordable Housing Levy
- Safe Stay Community Sites #2 and #3
- Short-Term Rentals

Redevelopment

- Waterfront Gateway
- The Heights District
- Main Street Promise

Transportation

- Complete Streets Projects
 - Fort Vancouver Way/ Fourth Plain Blvd.
 - McGillivray Blvd.
- Transportation System Plan

Climate and Environment

- Climate Action Framework

Parks Development Projects

- Ida Bell Jones Park
- Raymond Shaffer Park
- Oakbrook Park

Public Safety

- Police Chief Recruitment

Opportunities for Broader Policy Direction

- City Council Community Forums
- Biennial Budget
- Biennial Community Survey
- Future of Neighborhoods Initiative

Since June 2022, City staff also engaged more than 1,015 community members in visioning conversations to learn more about community needs and hopes for the future. These conversations have included one-on-one meetings, tabling and intercept interviews at community events and small group dialogues over the course of three City Council Community Forums—community conversations that have brought together between 40 and 80 community members to share their input directly with councilmembers.

City staff completed a systematic review of the engagement efforts listed above, noting themes that have appeared consistently across visioning conversations and other projects. Care was taken to improve the accuracy of analysis by triangulating across multiple data sources, multiple methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) and multiple researchers (different staff and project teams). To help inform the Strategic Plan, the resulting summary included major themes organized by Focus Area. City staff and members of the SPAC were able to use this work to ensure that the resulting plan reflects a greater understanding of community needs, challenges and hopes for the future. Engagement results have also helped inform the language and examples used throughout the Strategic Plan, including descriptions of Core Values, Focus Areas, strategic outcomes, and performance measures.

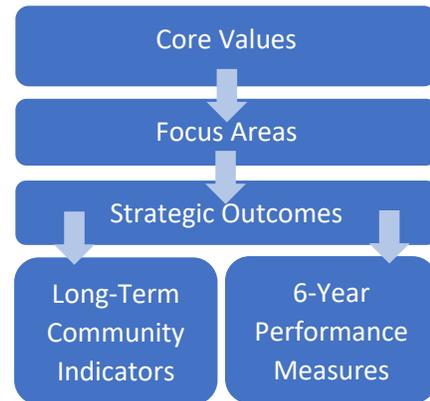
Technical Engagement

City staff were engaged throughout the Strategic Plan process to provide input on Focus Areas and to refine community indicators and performance measures. In addition to the six-year horizon of the Strategic Plan, City staff also work within a two-year budgeting cycle and, in many cases, a comprehensive plan that can range from 10 to 20 years. These different planning horizons help guide the work and funding of the organization. Identifying community Focus Areas and Core Values assists staff to prioritize work and to measure progress towards outcomes.

Focus Areas

Introduction and Structure

The following focus areas, strategic outcomes, community indicators and performance measures set a path forward for the City. These elements will be used to set city-wide priorities and measure progress over time.



Definition of Terms	
Focus Area	Council-identified topic of priority – title of category.
Strategic Outcome	Defines the state we are trying to achieve.
Long-term Community Indicator	At-a-glance view of the major aspects of community condition, tracks trends over time but may not be directly connected to specific city services.
Six-year Priority Performance Measures (goal statements and metrics)	A department or program level measurement aligned with a Focus Area. Measures the City’s contribution (through its programs and policies) towards achieving the strategic outcome.
Goal Statement	What will be accomplished in the next six years to support the strategic outcome.
Metrics	Associated with a goal statement so that progress towards the goal can be quantified. Includes the context of a target, defines what is being measured, identifies data source, and describes why it matters.
Types of Measures	<p>Select a mosaic of measures to have a complete picture of complex issues and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Results/Effectiveness – the change in either the quality of life or behavior of a population or place  Service Experience – the level of satisfaction with a city program/activity experience  Efficiency – the unit of performance/output achieved per unit of input (\$)  Output – the amount of products/services delivered to or received by customers of a city program/activity

External Factors and Emerging Issues	As identified by staff and strategic plan advisory committee members.
Related Plans	List of existing city plans that are related to the focus area.

Transportation and mobility

Strategic outcome - What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver has a safe, future-ready, and convenient transportation system that offers affordable and climate-friendly options for people to get where they need to be. All community members can walk, roll, bike, drive, and take transit to reach their destination. Vancouver considers the needs of different communities when designing transportation infrastructure and prioritizes equity. Vancouver’s transportation network supports the local and regional economy and facilitates the movement of goods in addition to people.

Long-term community indicators

TM.CI.1 Mode split

Definition: The breakdown of how Vancouverites get around, typically representing the percentage of travelers using a particular type of transportation (walk, bike, public transit, etc.).

Data source: US Census Bureau – American Community Survey Table

Why it matters: Research shows that active transport is inversely related to obesity rates. Air Quality (especially sulfur and VOC emissions) is typically higher in areas where active transportation (walking, biking) is popular than in those in which it is unpopular. This popularity comes with additional health benefits. Research suggests that those who commute using active methods report lower commute stress levels. It is important to note that this may be related to city size, because as size increases, public transit stress increases.

TM.CI.2 Transportation user experience

Definition: The level of satisfaction based on users of the transportation system in Vancouver.

Data source: Periodic, statistically valid community survey

Why it matters: Understanding public sentiment about using the methods for getting around the community can provide insight into what is desired/required by customers and identify gaps.

TM.CI.3 Transportation fatalities & serious injuries

Definition: The number of fatal and serious injuries (including vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, transit) by year on all roads within Vancouver per 10,000 residents.

Data source: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Patrol, and Vancouver Police Department

Why it matters: This is a standard metric commonly used to inform transportation and road safety policy and planning and aligns with the Washington State Department of Transportation’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we adjust city funding and staffing to achieve these goals?
- How might we effectively collaborate with agencies, organizations, and the Vancouver community around mobility decision-making?
- How might we lower the risk of travel-related injury and protect and promote public health?
- How might we conduct public outreach and collaboration with all transportation users to discuss prioritization and trade-offs?
- How might we ensure residents’ needs are met within 15-minute neighborhoods?
- How might we prepare for and lead in leveraging rapidly evolving technology in transportation?

Economic opportunity

Strategic outcome - What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver is a place where a wide variety of businesses of all sizes, from young startups to established enterprises, grow, and thrive. A host of education and training opportunities bring prosperity to those who live here and provide a skilled workforce for companies.

Long-term community indicators

EO.CI.1 Median household income (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity and age demographics where available)

Definition: The middle point of the range of household income levels in Vancouver.

Data source: Department of Commerce, US Census data

Why it matters: Provides information about the financial resources available to households broken down into different community groups.

EO.CI.2 Per capita income (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity and age demographics where available)

Definition: Mean money income received in the past 12 months computed for every person in a geographic area.

Data source: Department of Commerce, US Census data – American Community Survey

Why it matters: Life satisfaction is strongly correlated with per capita income. This is particularly true among disadvantaged countries, regions, and communities, because income gains in these places are associated with greatest increases in life satisfaction.

EO.CI.3 Business diversity (MWOBs [women and minority owned businesses], green economy, CREDC target sectors)

Definition: An assessment of the local businesses in our community considering sector, ownership, and size as determined by number of employees.

Data source: US Census Data, Annual Business Survey

Why it matters: Having a diversity of businesses may help contribute to a healthy and resilient local economy. Understanding the types of businesses and any disparities may provide information for improving equity and diversity.

EO.CI.4 Job creation

Definition: The number of new jobs created in Vancouver.

Data source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics (Portland/Hillsboro/Vancouver)

Why it matters: An indicator of the health of the local economy, job creation means businesses are hiring.

EO.CI.5 Unemployment (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity and age demographics where available)

Definition: The share of the labor force without a job.

Data source: Bureau of Labor and Statistics (Portland/Hillsboro/Vancouver)

Why it matters: An indicator of the health of the local economy.

EO.CI.6 Education attainment (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity, special education, English language learners, low-income)

Definition: The number of residents with high school, associate and four-year college degrees broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, and income, expressed as a percentage of all residents 25 and older in a region.

Data source: US Census Bureau American Community Survey

Why it matters: Researchers correlate higher levels of educational attainment with better economic prospects. Earnings increase with higher levels of education. A person's earning power compounds, rather than merely increases, with higher levels of educational attainment. However, the benefits of higher levels of education do not accrue evenly. White and Asian individuals receive greater economic benefit from education than Black and Hispanic individuals. In addition, for White and Asian individuals, education has a protective effect on wealth during times of recession while this benefit is absent for Black and Hispanic individuals for equal education.

EO.CI.7 Pre-k enrollment (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity, special education, English language learners, low-income)

Definition: Total count of children ages 3 to 4 enrolling in public or private preschool.

Data source: US Census Bureau

Why it matters: Preschool attendance is associated with higher reading and math skills compared to non-preschool enrollment. Some studies show preschool enrollment can facilitate labor force participation and increase educational attainment for parents.

EO.CI.8 Workforce readiness survey

Definition: Number and kinds of businesses reporting that they are able to find qualified job applicants locally.

Data source: Community survey

Why it matters: In addition to having job opportunities, our community must have a workforce that is prepared to fill those jobs.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we ensure that all residents experience economic mobility?
- How might we maintain a resilient economy by supporting small businesses and skilled workforce that provides equitable opportunities for people and businesses?

Housing and human needs

What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver meets basic needs and partners with organizations to support its communities. All communities have access to safe and affordable housing, healthcare, food, transportation, education, and dependable access to utilities.

Long-term community indicators

HH.CI.1 Point in time count of individuals experiencing homelessness (race/ethnicity and age)

Definition: A countywide count of people experiencing homelessness held during one day in January each year, it includes individuals living unsheltered, those living in shelter, and transitional housing programs.

Data source: Council for the Homeless, Homeless Management Information System

Why it matters: Homelessness and the many factors (shortage in shelter, affordable housing, inequity in employment/housing/education, generational poverty, untreated mental health, and substance use) that contribute to it are a priority concern based on community survey results.

HH.CI.2 Housing affordability

Definition: The Housing Affordability Index (HAI) measures whether a typical family earns enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a typical home. A value of 100

means that a family with the median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. For example, a composite HAI of 120.0 means a family earning the median family income has 120% of the income necessary to qualify for a conventional loan covering 80 percent of a median-priced existing single-family home.

Data source: Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED)

Why it matters: Median home values are often tracked as an indicator of the wealth of a community. Many municipalities are funded through property tax which is closely tied to home values. Households that are cost-burdened, characterized as spending 30% or more of household income on housing, are more likely to experience marital dissatisfaction and are less likely to spend money on child enrichment, healthcare, and food. Lack of access to affordable housing can increase commute times (leading to lower quality of life) and higher rates of eviction. Typically, a household's second-largest expenditure, transportation costs, are largely a function of the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a household chooses to live. Opposing trends are at work on housing affordability: lower mortgage costs, lower home values and the health of the market economy all contribute to a higher score.

HH.CI.3 Children in poverty (race/ethnicity, special education, English language learners, low-income)

Definition: The number of children under 18 living below the federally defined poverty line, expressed as a percentage of all children under 18.

Data source: US Census Bureau

Why it matters: Childhood poverty is strongly and negatively correlated with children's mental, emotional, and behavioral health in childhood and long-term life chances. Children in low socioeconomic status households are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to experience developmental and academic difficulties.

HH.CI.4 Percentage of residents who are healthy food insecure (Disaggregated by race/ethnicity and age)

Definition: Food insecurity is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture as the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life.

Data source: Feeding America's Mind the Meal Gap

Why it matters: Food insecurity is associated with numerous adverse social and health outcomes and is increasingly considered a critical public health issue. Key drivers of food insecurity include unemployment, poverty, and income shocks, which can prevent adequate access to food.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we increase equitably distributed options for household availability in all parts of Vancouver?
- How might we leverage both prevention and service delivery to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness?
- How might we proactively create conditions that result in optimal physical, mental, and behavioral health, and ensure access to health services are available to all Vancouver residents?
- How might we ensure race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, education, geographic location, and income level do not pre-determine whether individuals are able to achieve better health?

Vibrant and distinct neighborhoods

What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver offers a variety of accessible places and spaces to interact and enjoy nature, art, culture, food, shopping, and community. Neighbors care for each other and show up in times of need.

Long-term community indicators

VDN.CI.1 Neighborhood cohesion

Definition: Percent of adults who report a sense of high social cohesion (trust and feeling connected) in their neighborhoods.

Data source: Community survey

Why it matters: A cohesive society is one where people are protected against life risks, trust their neighbors and the institutions of the state, and can work towards a better future for themselves and their families. Social cohesion, built on social inclusion, social capital, and social mobility, is the glue that holds society together.

VDN.CI.2 Diversity of businesses in neighborhood districts

Definition: An assessment of local businesses within a neighborhood district considering sector, ownership, and size as determined by number of employees.

Data source: US Census Data, Annual Business Survey

Why it matters: Having a diversity of businesses may help contribute to a healthy and resilient local, neighborhood economy. Understanding the types of businesses and any disparities may provide information for improving equity and diversity.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we create equitable access to parks, trails, open space, and recreational opportunities?
- How might we support more connected communities, strengthening our community well-being and enabling more effective responses and recoveries tied to major events?

Culture and heritage

What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver celebrates culture and heritage. Public events, museums, cultural centers, concerts, and exhibits offer opportunities for communities to learn about different cultures and experiences.

Long-term community indicators

CH.CI.1 Arts-related businesses

Definition: Total Number of Arts-Related Businesses and Rate per 1,000. Businesses include those in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code 71: art galleries, camera and photographic supply stores, bookstores, performing arts companies, performing arts promoters, independent artists, writers and performers, musical instrument stores, compact disc and record stores, and museums.

Data source: US Census Data, County Business Patterns

Why it matters: The activities of art-related businesses and cultural and heritage organizations foster cultural and creative vitality. A growing number of arts-related businesses also provides opportunities for individuals to learn and participate in a rich array of arts, culture, and heritage activities. They are also essential to supplying arts and cultural organizations with products and services. Consequently, their number reflects, in part, the strength of the arts sector in a regional economy.

CH.CI.2 Economic impact of arts, culture, and heritage

Definition: The portion of community members employed by Arts & Culture businesses as defined by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code, and the compensation they receive. The value of the goods and services produced in an area related to arts, culture, historic preservation, and heritage.

Data source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts, US Census Data

Why it matters: The Vancouver community recognizes the educational, recreational, aesthetic, environmental, and economic development value of having a large area replete with public art, preserved landmarked buildings, and beautiful green spaces. This indicator helps measure the economic value of arts, culture, historic preservation, and heritage in our community so that we can make informed decisions about developing a healthy local creative economy and supporting ongoing stewardship, conservation, public access, and interpretation.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we inclusively honor and preserve Vancouver’s unique and diverse history, culture, and traditions?
- How might we ensure the creative industry has equitable access to capacity building and revenue development resources and capital?
- How might we increase the supply of affordable public and private spaces (e.g., housing, work, studio, performance) for our creative industry to survive?

Existing city plans & initiatives related to this focus area

- Culture, Arts & Heritage Plan

Safe and prepared community

What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver feels like a safe place to live, work, learn, and play. All communities are free from violence and crime and care for each other in times of need. Communities understand what to do in times of crisis because Vancouver plans for disasters and is ready to adapt to change. All communities have dependable access to utilities and buildings, bridges, and roads are designed to be modern, safe, inclusive, and accessible.

Long-term community indicators

SPC.CI.1 Residents’ perception of safety

Definition: How residents feel about public safety in their community.

Data source: Community Survey

Why it matters: Perceptions of neighborhood crime are negatively associated with level of physical activity among youth. Poorer perceptions of neighborhood safety are associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms among adults ages 50-74. Perceptions of neighborhood crime have been positively associated with other mental health problems, such as anger, depression, and anxiety, as well as vicarious victimization by exposure to violence in the neighborhood and visual signs of disorder. However, individuals who have a strong connection to their neighbors are less likely to worry about crime, even when living in areas with high levels of disorder.

SPC.CI.2 Residents’ perception of community preparedness (individual, family, neighbors) for disaster

Definition: How residents feel about the community’s preparedness for a disaster.

Data source: Community survey

Why it matters: Residents are more likely to undertake disaster preparedness if they perceive it to be effective. Government trust can directly increase perceived efficacy and indirectly increase self-efficacy.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we engage and inform the community to ensure that public safety services are delivered to a diverse community and vulnerable populations in a safe, timely, and proactive manner given the challenges of significant population growth, racial inequities, and traffic congestion?
- How might we build meaningful community relationships that transform our organizations, foster trust and legitimacy, and increase compliance with laws and regulations?
- How might we strengthen local and regional partnerships to prevent, prepare for, and respond to natural and human-caused hazards?

Climate and natural systems

What are we trying to achieve?

Environmental stewardship and efforts to address climate change ensure that everyone has a sustainable future. We recognize the intrinsic value of the land beyond the economic benefits it provides. Vancouver protects, restores, and cares for the natural environment upon which all living things depend. The health of our natural systems supports the health of all who live, work, and play in our community.

Long-term community indicators

CN.CI.1 Greenhouse gas emissions

Definition: Greenhouse gases (GHGs) include carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide and cause climate change.

Data source: Periodic greenhouse gas emission inventory of community and of city operations.

Why it matters: Addressing climate change and the many impacts associated with it begins with decreasing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted.

CN.CI.2 Waste diversion

Definition: Tons of solid waste diverted to recycling/composting as a ratio of tons of solid waste collected in the waste stream.

Data source: City of Vancouver solid waste contract records

Why it matters: This indicator tracks how much solid waste is collected for recycling or otherwise diverted from disposal each year. Diverting solid waste from a landfill conserves valuable resources, saves energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful environmental pollutants, conserves landfill space, and creates jobs. Greater public outreach can change personal behavior and increase waste diversion.

CN.CI.3 Tree canopy

Definition: The percentage of land area covered by tree foliage.

Data source: GIS maps and aerial imaging.

Why it matters: Tree canopy contributes to air and stormwater quality and minimizes urban heat island effect. For maximum benefits, a 40% cover is recommended.

CN.CI.4 Parkland acreage per 1000 residents

Definition: This metric is calculated by dividing the total number of City of Vancouver park acres by city population and multiplying the factor by 1,000.

Data source: City Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Staff, Census data

Why it matters: According to the National Recreation and Park Association, greenspace exposure corresponds with improved physical health, including decreases in stress, blood pressure, heart rate, and risk of chronic disease (cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular heart disease). Children with access to parks and facilities have shown decreased prevalence of obesity compared to children without access. Time spent in nature positively impacts mental health by increasing cognitive performance and well-being and alleviating illnesses such as depression, attention deficit disorders, and Alzheimers. For climate benefits, Parks lower ground temperatures with tree canopy, clean water, reduce flooding and contribute to healthier air. Trees and vegetation in parks help reduce air pollution directly by removing pollutants and reducing air temperature. Urban parks can improve the environment, enhance storm water management, reduce traffic noise and increase biodiversity.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we proactively identify, assess, and manage risks related to the quality, reliability, and access to critical infrastructure given the challenges of an aging infrastructure, greater climate impacts, and population growth?
- How might we improve our approach to facilities and infrastructure management to ensure a high-quality, efficient, and sustainable portfolio that supports both staff and the customer?

Existing city plans & initiatives related to this focus area

- Urban Forestry Plan
- Climate Action Framework
- Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan
- Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, Arts & Culture Plan

High performing government

What are we trying to achieve?

Vancouver's government is reliable, fiscally responsible, equitable, and open to compromise. Decision-making processes are transparent. City leaders have integrity and work with the community to plan for the future.

Long-term community indicators

HPG.CI.1 Price of government (city services) per capita as percentage of real median household income (race/ethnicity and age)

Definition: Sum of all taxes, fees, and charges collected by a city or county as a percentage of aggregate personal income. That is, all revenue excluding that which comes from "Other Financing Sources" (Long-term debt proceeds, sale of capital assets, transfers from other funds, insurance proceeds) and "Non-Revenues" (Cash received for accounting purposes but is not technically revenue).

Data source: Revenues: Washington State Auditor's Office, City of Vancouver Budget Office. Personal Income: US Census, total population in City of Vancouver, per capita income.

Why it matters: This indicator allows a local government to monitor the level of resources available to provide critical services within its jurisdiction and helps inform the price range within which residents and businesses are willing to pay for living in a city with those services.

HPG.CI.2 Resident satisfaction with municipal services (race/ethnicity, age, income, disability)

Definition: How satisfied residents are with municipal services in their community.

Data source: Community survey

Why it matters: Government services are often compulsory and serve a broad base of customers. Assessing the level of satisfaction with service can provide information about service gaps to certain populations or barriers to adequate service delivery.

HPG.CI.3 Municipal bond rating

Definition: Credit rating or assessment of the financial health of the organization as determined by third party sources.

Data source: Moody's and S&P

Why it matters: Bond ratings convey a sense of confidence and ability of the organization to finance projects to create a vibrant, safe, and diverse community.

External factors and emerging issues

- How might we address the fact that currently data maturity of organization is individualized?
- How might we foster and model relationships of trust, welcome diverse viewpoints, and confront racism at all levels (personal, cultural, and institutional) in our community and in the City organization?
- How might we create systems that recognize the ability of underrepresented communities to co-create solutions with local government and with each other?
- How might we achieve more equitable outcomes and deliver services that meet or exceed the expectations of the people we serve?

- How might we continue to meet the needs of a rapidly growing city while managing organizational capacity and ensuring fiscal responsibility?
- How might we attract and retain a talented workforce that sustains a workplace culture of engagement, community focus, and high performance?
- How might we mature the City’s data and technology capabilities to provide secure and scalable solutions that enable staff to deliver accessible, modern, and impactful services to all residents?

Next steps

This plan reflects a foundational vision for the City of Vancouver. It provides a mechanism for the City and community to ensure accountability to the core values and focus areas by assessing and measuring progress against the outlined indicators and measures.

The Strategic Plan will inform future efforts by:

1. Connecting the Strategic Plan focus areas to the City budget and investments. City Council will examine budget proposals through the lens of the Strategic Plan to ensure programmatic investments and policies align with the indicators and measures.
2. Creating a community dashboard to demonstrate transparency and ensure community members can evaluate progress over time.
3. Aligning other City processes, plans, and policies with the overall values embraced within the Strategic Plan.
4. Maintaining an ongoing SPAC to periodically assess progress, provide feedback, and inform decision-making as it relates to implementation of programs and actions connected to the focus areas and aligned with the core values.
5. Developing and maintaining communications that support ongoing community engagement and awareness of the Strategic Plan. Sharing opportunities to participate in other planning processes connected to the indicators and measures.