



# Metro Vancouver's 2025 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

## Engagement Summary

### ... & MATCH

... services that make our life better.  
...ork out to for 2024 if they were paid monthly.



Liquid Waste



**\$0.58**  
per month

\$7 a year paid through  
your city property tax bill



Regional Planning

These fees are base...  
"househol...  
estimated...  
Because I...  
customers...  
based on where...  
distributed by your municipality

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who provided input for the 2025 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan. Metro Vancouver embraces collaboration and innovation to provide sustainable regional services, contributing to a livable and resilient region, and a healthy natural environment for current and future generations. The purpose of this engagement was to hear and consider comments and concerns from residents as Metro Vancouver finalizes its 2025 Budget and 2025-2029 Five-Year Financial Plan.

## About Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is a diverse organization that plans for and delivers regional utility services, including water, sewers and wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. It also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, provides affordable housing, and serves as a regional federation. The organization is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation located in the region of the same name. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each member jurisdiction.

## First Nations Engagement

Metro Vancouver acknowledges that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: ǵǵǵǵ (Katzie), ǵǵǵǵ (Kwantlen), ǵǵǵǵ (Kwikwetlem), ǵǵǵǵ (Matsqui), ǵǵǵǵ (Musqueam), ǵǵǵǵ (Qayqayt), Semiahmoo, ǵǵǵǵ (Squamish), ǵǵǵǵ (Tsawwassen), and ǵǵǵǵ (Tsleil-Waututh).

Metro Vancouver respects the diverse and distinct histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, which collectively enrich our lives and the region.

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October 2024

Cover: Budget engagement activation at the PNE

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# Executive Summary

From July 31 to September 16, Metro Vancouver invited and encouraged the general public to learn more about Metro Vancouver’s budget, how it integrates into their property taxes and utility bills, and to provide feedback on what they would like Metro Vancouver to consider as we work to manage the overall estimated costs related to our services for 2025.

Metro Vancouver staff conducted public engagement on the 2025 Budget over a two-week period at the PNE, where around 90,000 visitors to Metro Vancouver’s showcase had an opportunity to participate in a budget-specific display and game. The budget display was staffed throughout the PNE, with subject matter experts present for around 30 hours across the two weeks. 8,483 residents engaged with the budget game and subject matter experts and submitted 79 hardcopy budget feedback forms. An online survey on the budget was also promoted via media release and a social media campaign, with 422 people submitting responses.

Overall, the highest proportion of comments were related to concerns of affordability and livability in the region and an interest in seeing Metro Vancouver contain costs to help reduce financial pressures on households. The second highest proportion of comments was related to an interest in ensuring that Metro Vancouver is investing in infrastructure (“so we don’t have a Calgary scenario”), while also ensuring that major projects are being managed well, particularly related to strong project oversight, transparency, and efficiency. Many respondents expressed interest in continuing investment in greenspace and climate action, investing in the future, and prioritizing healthy people and a healthy environment.

Because costs of the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant Program and other Metro Vancouver expenses (such as Board travel, CAO wage, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities networking event) had been prominent in the news over the summer, we anticipated and received comments from the public related to that specific project and organizational fiscal responsibility.



Public engagement at the PNE Fair 2024

# About the 2025 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

The following information was presented to the public to help improve understanding of Metro Vancouver services, how the rates show up on bills the residents may see, and anticipated rate increases for 2025. Information was available on the website, at the beginning of the online form, and at the PNE engagement display.

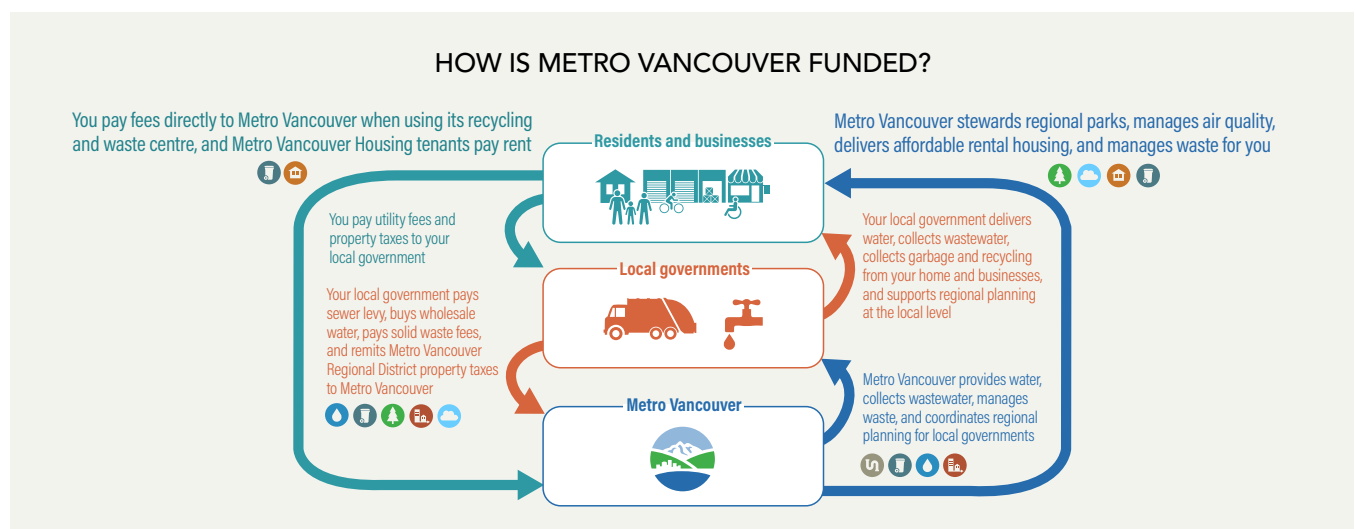
Metro Vancouver provides services that are key to the prosperity, resilience, equity, and livability of the region. By working together, local municipalities, Tsawwassen First Nation, and Electoral Area A are able to provide high-quality services at great value.

Metro Vancouver needs to regularly upgrade and renew its infrastructure, as well as do regular maintenance to ensure its services work 24/7.

## Our services, and how they're funded:

Metro Vancouver's primary funding sources come from household, commercial, and industrial ratepayers around the region. Metro Vancouver also receives third-party funding like senior government grants, development contributions, energy sales, and other fees. When setting the budgets, these other funding sources are incorporated prior to calculating the annual rates to assist in reaching a sustainable annual increase.

METRO VANCOUVER SERVICE	PRIMARY FUNDING SOURCE	BILLING / COLLECTIONS OF FEES AND CHARGES
Water	Water sales	City water utility bills
Liquid waste / sewers	Sewer levy	City sewer utility bills
Solid waste	Tipping fees	User pay-as-you-go fees
Regional parks	Property taxes	City property tax bills
Air quality management	Property taxes	City property tax bills
Regional planning	Property taxes	City property tax bills
Affordable rental housing	Rental fees	Tenant lease /rental agreements



## 2024 Rates

In 2024, all of Metro Vancouver's services cost on average \$698 per year, per household — that's about \$58 per month. This amount is an input for the municipality, treaty First Nation, or electoral area when setting the annual water utility, sewer utility, and property tax rates.

How that breaks down annually:

- \$4 for regional planning
- \$7 for air quality management
- \$60 for regional parks
- \$68 for solid waste management
- \$189 for drinking water
- \$349 for wastewater treatment and other liquid waste services
- And \$21 for other regional services

Another important and cost effective service Metro Vancouver provides the region is affordable rental housing through the non-profit Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation. Metro Vancouver Housing has over 3,400 affordable rental homes on 49 sites, serving close to 10,000 people. The initial capital funding to support development of new housing units comes from a combination of debt financing, BC Housing, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and other provincial and federal government support. Operations are financed almost entirely through rents paid by tenants.

## Total 2024 Metro Vancouver Budget

Metro Vancouver's 2024 operating budget is \$1.2 billion and the planned capital expenditures are \$1.4 billion. Approximately 80% of the total operating budget is used to maintain the water, sewer, and solid waste systems. The remaining supports other services, such as regional planning and parks, that help improve the region as a whole.

## Anticipated Base Rate Increase for 2025

Next year, Metro Vancouver estimates that it will need to increase the average overall rate per household by about \$76 annually in order to continue to:

- Deliver its core services
- Build new infrastructure to support growth
- Respond to regulatory changes

Metro Vancouver estimates the base rate increase would bring the estimated cost per household to a regional average of \$774 for the year (that's equivalent to about \$65 a month) for the Metro Vancouver portions of their municipal water utility bills, sewer utility bills, and property taxes. Rates will vary based on where you live.

## North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant Program Rates

Starting in 2025, in addition to the base rate, Metro Vancouver will begin to collect funds to support the construction of the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant Program. This program includes the treatment plant, pipes and pump stations, and pre-work on decommissioning the Lions Gate Wastewater Treatment Plant.

In 2025, Metro Vancouver estimates it will need to collect an amount that averages about \$80 to \$150 additional dollars annually from households in the region. The region is divided into four sewerage areas, so where you live will influence how much of your sewer utility bill will go toward the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant.



## Five-Year Financial Plan

Metro Vancouver also develops a Five-Year Financial Plan. The current Five-Year Financial Plan forecasts base rate increases of around \$40 (5%) annually for each household for 2026, 2027, and 2028. Comments provided as part of this year’s Budget Engagement Survey will also be considered in finalizing the Five-Year Financial Plan.

# Engagement Promotion

The budget engagement was promoted on various online platforms, including the Metro Vancouver website and on social media. In addition to Metro Vancouver promotion, member jurisdictions were engaged to distribute information about the engagement through their platforms.

## Website

The Metro Vancouver budget webpage was used to promote the engagement opportunity. The webpage also provides information on Metro Vancouver’s budgets and financial plans, the budgeting process and schedule, and a breakdown of where the money comes from and what services it goes toward.

## Feedback Form

ZenCity (formerly called Civil Space), an online engagement platform, was used to host a feedback form for interested and affected parties to provide input and comments.

## Video

A video explaining Metro Vancouver’s budget, the household impact metric, and how the budget fits into utility bills and property taxes was available on the website, in the movie tent at the PNE, and boosted on YouTube resulting in 291,956 views over the course of the engagement period.

## Social Media











The engagement opportunity was promoted through a social media campaign on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. The social media strategy was to use a series of organic posts to build awareness of the project, and encourage feedback and social sharing.

## News Release

A [news release](#) was sent to all local media on August 2, 2024, resulting in media coverage with CBC Vancouver, CTV, and CKNW.

## E-newsletters

The engagement opportunity was promoted in e-newsletters to Metro Vancouver subscribers, including the Metro Update which reaches 4,000 subscribers.

Engagement Promotion	
 Promoted to <b>~4,000</b> Metro Update email subscribers	 <b>291,956+</b> budget video views
 <b>14</b> days at the PNE (90,000 showcase visitors)	 <b>1,453</b> budget webpage visits
 <b>28,731</b> unique views	 <b>36</b> promotional and educational posts on social
 <b>1</b> formal letter submitted	 <b>532</b> comments, reactions, shares, clicks
 <b>3</b> emails	 <b>3</b> media articles, resulting in over 1.5 million impressions



# Engagement Participation

AUGUST 17 TO SEPTEMBER 2	JULY 31 TO SEPTEMBER 16	AUGUST 17 TO SEPTEMBER 2
<b>8,483</b> PNE budget display interactions	<b>422</b> Online feedback form responses	<b>79</b> Hardcopy feedback form responses

## Feedback Form Responses – Open Comments

We invited the public to provide feedback by completing a feedback form that was available online and in hard copy format. The online feedback was centered on providing an open opportunity for residents to comment on Metro Vancouver’s 2025 budget and on the importance of Metro Vancouver meeting its core objectives.

Metro Vancouver uses ZenCity for online engagement (formerly Civil Space), which provides opportunities for quantitative and qualitative input through a range of preference ranking, open ended, and direct questions. While online engagement is an important component of a comprehensive engagement strategy, it does not provide statistically relevant data. ZenCity participation does not require registration or a password, and does not protect against multiple submissions. The online feedback form submissions included 422 non-duplicated IP addresses.

There were no trends in the data that showed if residents clustered by age, area, or dwelling type provided responses that showed a pattern. Similarly, there was no trend indicating residents who reside on the North Shore were more likely to comment on the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Metro Vancouver received responses from across the region, with the highest representation from Vancouver (35% of responses), Burnaby (11% of responses), District of North Vancouver District (10% of responses), City of North Vancouver (7% of responses), and Coquitlam and New Westminister (6% of responses each).

Responses to the feedback forms varied between the online submissions and those received in person at the PNE.

Hard copy feedback was most likely to refer to support for:

- Housing affordability (22%)
- Investments in infrastructure (eg. so we don’t have a “Calgary scenario”) (9%)
- Investments in agriculture, greenspace, and climate action (9%)
- The North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant specifically (4%)

Many responses to the open question were related to topic areas outside of Metro Vancouver’s services.

Online feedback was more likely to refer to concerns about:

- Staffing or wages (10%)
- Costs of living and an interest in Metro Vancouver containing costs to help reduce financial pressure (9%)
- Interest in major infrastructure, particularly related to strong project oversight, transparency, and ensuring efficiency (9%)
- Concerns regarding the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant costs (7%)
- General positive feedback related to recent decisions by the Chair to limit travel and contain costs, investing in the future, and prioritizing healthy people and a healthy environment

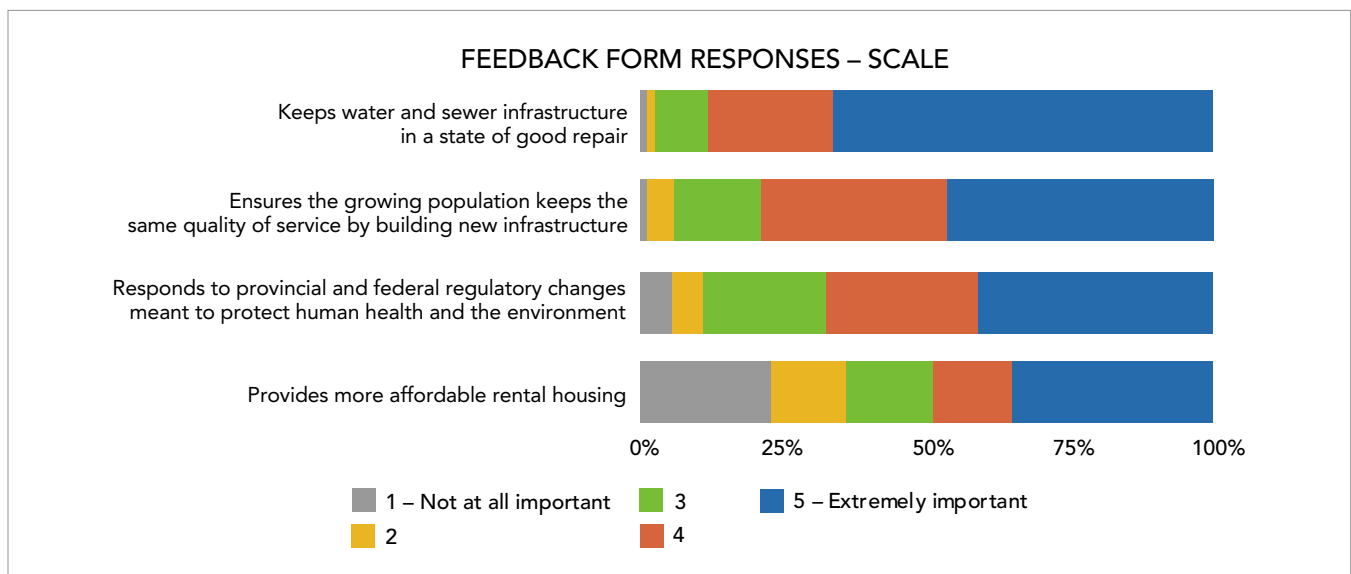


## Feedback Form Responses – Scale

The survey also included a section asking residents to respond on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being extremely important) how important it is to them that Metro Vancouver deliver on specific objectives. All results were above a 3. Keeping infrastructure in a state of good repair was most commonly rated 5 (an average rating of 4.5); followed by service growth through new infrastructure (average rating of 4.1); responding to provincial and federal regulatory changes meant to protect human health and the environment (average rating of 3.9); and providing more affordable rental housing (average rating of 3.2).

## PNE Interactive Display

The Metro Vancouver showcase at the PNE features displays on each of Metro Vancouver’s service areas and highly engaging, interactive displays that connect residents with the work that Metro Vancouver does. For 2024, a new budget display area was added to engage residents on Metro Vancouver’s budget with the objective of teaching residents about how they contribute to Metro Vancouver’s services and how it appears in their property taxes and utility bills, and offering an opportunity for visitors to discuss costs with staff.



There was also a game in the budget display area that featured a spinning wheel with wedges that put the regional average household impact for each service, broken down as if it were a monthly cost. After spinning and landing on a number, the participant then tried to match the number with the service. It provided a fun way to discuss what Metro Vancouver's services are, and why all residents contribute more to big ticket items like water and liquid waste infrastructure.

Over the course of the 2024 PNE, almost 90,000 visitors came into Metro Vancouver's PNE display (representing 14% of the PNE gate). Of those, 8,483 visitors engaged with staff at Metro Vancouver's budget display. The display was staffed by professional outreach staff from 11 am-10 pm, with Metro Vancouver subject matter experts at the display for 3 hours on 10 of the 14 PNE days, for a total of 30 hours of staff engagement time.

Subject matter experts shared common themes from their conversations, which included:

- Throughout the engagement, parents were actively engaging with their children to help them think through their guessing process, and were interested to follow up on their learning by visiting

other activations in the showcase – such as going to “Infrastructure Way” and visiting the virtual reality booth to get a sense of how large Metro Vancouver's infrastructure is.

- Many people brought up their utility bill, expressing that what they get is different than what is on the display. This opened the door for us to share how Metro Vancouver's bill fits into the big picture of their property tax and utility bills.
- Solid waste was commonly assumed to be the most expensive service, with residents interested to learn more about why it was lower because of our user-pay model.
- Staff experienced people spinning the budget wheel and guessing lower amounts like \$0.33 or \$0.57 for regional parks while saying something to the effect of “we probably don't invest enough in parks so I'm guessing this” and were surprised and pleased to hear the work we were doing to protect greenspace.
- Overall, staff encountered limited comments on the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant Program, however, interested residents engaged in discussion with open curiosity and often took a copy of the backgrounder on the project.

## How Feedback Will Be Used

Thank you for sharing your input on what you would like Metro Vancouver to consider as we work to manage overall estimated costs related to our services for 2025. Input will be shared with the Metro Vancouver Board as members deliberate on the 2025 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan.

### Contact Us

**Metro Vancouver Information Centre:** 604-432-6200  
(Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm)

**Email:** [icentre@metrovancover.org](mailto:icentre@metrovancover.org)  
(Please include “Budget” in the subject line)

**Website:** [metrovancover.org](https://metrovancover.org) and search “Budget”

