

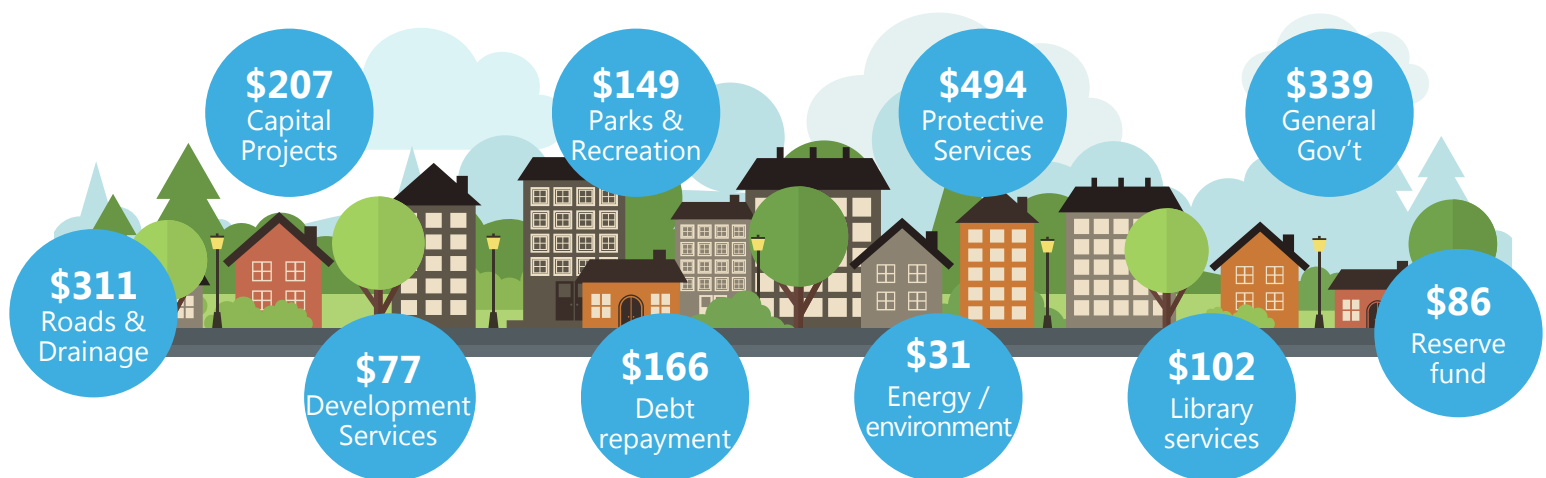
Your say, our budget 2025

Municipal budgeting is a year-round process, and public input is always welcome. Learn about the 2025 North Cowichan municipal budget, and share your comments about the services your tax dollars pay for.

What your taxes pay for

Your municipal tax dollars pay for a wide variety of projects, programs, and services across North Cowichan's large geographical area. From police and fire services to parks and recreation facilities, to roads, and road maintenance. Your tax bill includes charges levied by other government agencies - in fact, more than half your tax bill is funds collected on behalf of these agencies. When we are talking about the North Cowichan budget, this applies just to the municipal portion of your total tax bill.

A homeowner in North Cowichan with home that had an average assessed value of \$767,412 paid **\$1,962** in municipal taxes in 2024. Where did this money go?

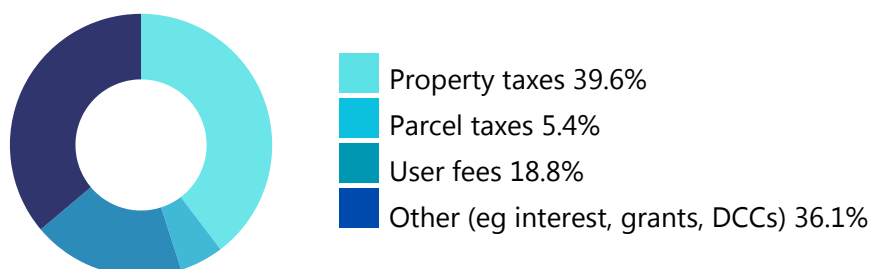


The remainder of your tax bill - **\$2,116** - is collected on behalf of other agencies:

- \$835 - Cowichan Valley Regional District
- \$281 - Cowichan Valley Regional Hospital District
- \$973 - Cowichan Valley School District 79
- \$27 - BC Assessment and Municipal Finance Authority

When we discuss North Cowichan's tax rate and budget, we are speaking only about the North Cowichan part of your bill.

Property taxes are one source of revenue. Additional revenue includes:



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The plans that drive direction

Council has adopted a number of plans, each with its own objectives, actions, and projects. Capital projects and service and program direction are, for the most part, tied to one of these plans. Doing all the work outlined in these plans is extensive, yet we want to make progress on these, and so a balance between direction, need, and available funding must be found.

- Council Strategic Plan
- Official Community Plan
- Master Transportation Plan
- Parks and Trails Master Plan
- Climate Adaptation Energy Plan
- Local Area Plans

The challenges

Every year presents its own budget challenges and difficult decisions, and North Cowichan's annual budget aims for a balance between setting a reasonable tax rate and delivering services expected by residents and businesses. Common challenges include:

- The budget must balance
- There is increased downloading from other levels of government, increased pressure to provide additional services; and increasing regulations that necessitate higher standards of care
- Aging infrastructure and increasing construction costs
- Increased non-controllable expenditures such as hydro, insurance, and fuel
- Inflationary costs and pressures

This year additional costs are impacting the budget:

- **9-1-1 E-Comm costs:** North Cowichan (as well as Colwood, Ladysmith, North Saanich, Sidney, Sooke, and View Royal) are now responsible for 100% of the costs for RCMP E-Comm 9-1-1 calls (previously covered by the provincial and federal governments).
 - For North Cowichan, this is an additional \$767,000 increase to tax revenue required
- **RCMP contract:** The RCMP negotiated a new contract in 2024 (which is retroactive to 2023). This contract includes a 4% salary increase per year. As well, a new RCMP position has been added to the detachment.
 - This amounts to a \$910,000 increase in the 2025-2026 RCMP contract
- **North Cowichan CUPE 358 agreement:** A new collective agreement with North Cowichan's 375 CUPE staff (who represent services and programs from road repair, and water and utility service to recreation programs and administration) is currently being negotiated. While the increase to wages is not known at this time, a budget for this in 2025 must be considered.

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2025 Budget

North Cowichan Council is considering a 9.1 per cent tax increase in 2025 to continue to deliver the programs and services our residents and businesses depend on. The proposed budget for general operations is estimated at \$75.8 million, which includes \$8.4 million of capital funding for general operations (roads and drainage, plus other capital such as vehicles, information technology, and buildings).

The property tax revenue needed to fund that portion of the budget is \$42.3 million.

Note that this is a preliminary estimate and may change as we get closer to setting the tax rate, including changes based on Council direction.

A percentage increase in the total revenue needed to fund the budget does not necessarily translate to the same percentage increase in the tax rate due to variables such as changes in assessment, non-market changes, distribution of taxes, etc.

Every \$382,000 in budget increase = a 1 per cent tax increase

2025 Capital Projects

In 2025, \$5.2 million of capital projects, or 12.37% of their cost, is expected to be funded through general taxation. In 2024 the amount funded through taxation was \$4.5 million (11.69%). Council decision is to increase capital contributions to 15% by 2028.

These are the anticipated major capital projects that are expected to take place in 2025:

- Active transportation projects
- Boys Road sidewalk and overlay
- Genoa Bay Road repair and rebuild
- Herd Road bridge repairs
- Emily Street storm water replacement
- Lakes Road multiuse trail
- Lakes Road bridge repair (design)
- Signalized crosswalk Tzouhalem at Jaynes
- Water main replacement*
- Waste water treatment plan upgrade*



Roads + drainage

\$4.8 million



Utilities*

\$31 million



Other**

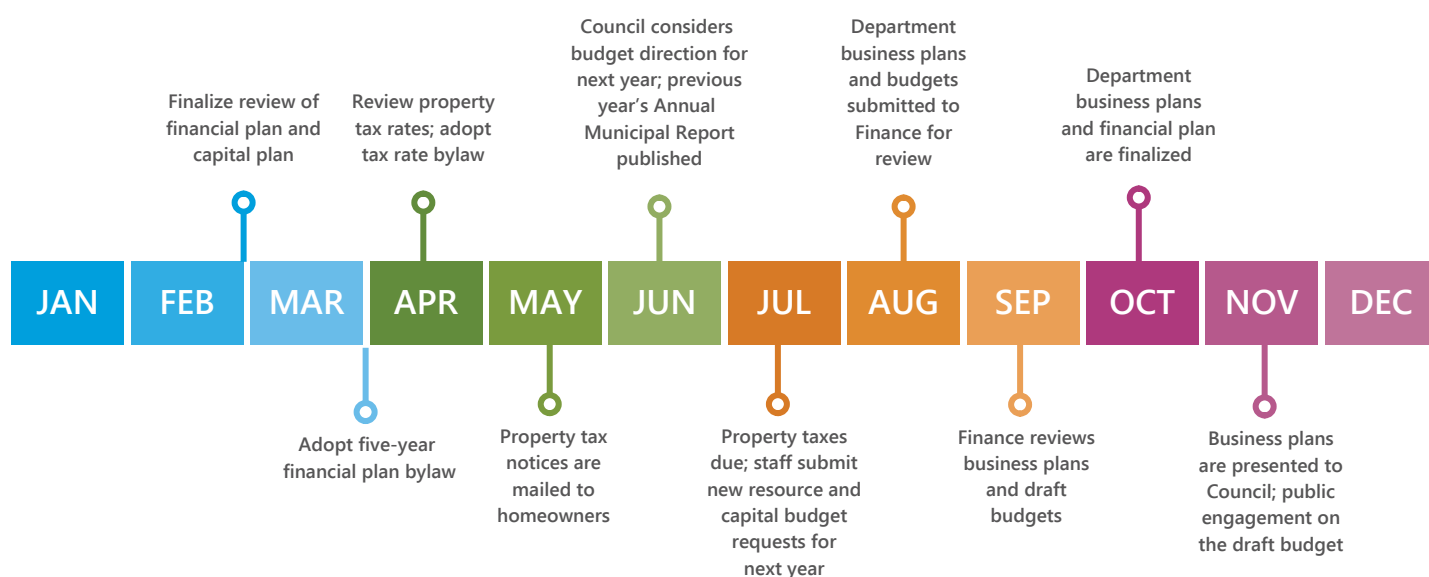
\$5.8 million

*Utility capital projects are funded through parcel taxes, not general property taxes
**Other capital includes things such as vehicles, information technology, buildings, etc.

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Share your feedback

North Cowichan's budget process takes place year-round, however the rubber hits the road each fall with department business plan presentations to Council. Feedback is considered by council, as well as an in-depth look at projects and budget lines to capture efficiencies, trade-offs, and prioritization.



Visit ConnectNorthCowichan.ca/budget-2025 to learn more, ask questions, take the survey, and to sign up for updates. When you sign up, we will let you know about key steps and decisions in the budget process.