

2026-2030 Financial Plan Engagement Summary

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional District of Nanaimo Board receive the “2026-2030 Financial Plan Engagement Summary” staff report, dated July 22, 2025, for information.

BACKGROUND

For the past several years, efforts have been made to provide the public with information on financial planning and the budget process, as well as to have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. This has primarily been achieved through the creation of the [RDN Budget Talks](#) page on the Get Involved RDN platform and with videos [About the RDN](#) and [RDN Regional Budgeting](#). The page, videos and opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback have also been promoted in newspaper advertising and on RDN social media platforms.

An online survey through the RDN Budget Talks webpage was conducted from May 28 – July 8, 2025, asking “*What are your priorities for the RDN Board to consider in the 2026-2030 budget?*”, for the public to share their thoughts on what they see as priorities for the RDN Board to consider during this year’s budgeting process. The annual survey was promoted with:

- online and newspaper advertising as part of the June 2025 RDN Updates publications with the Nanaimo News Bulletin, Parksville Qualicum Beach News and Gabriola Sounder
- news release
- social media posts on Facebook, Instagram and X
- an email update for subscribed participants was provided to those that have subscribed in the past to the RDN Budget Talks webpage

125 survey responses were received providing input on the 2026-2030 financial plan. An email was also received with additional comments from one individual. Comments were also received on the Facebook posts to promote the survey with direct input on financial plan priorities which are included in the following:

The most common theme based on the input received for 2026-2030 financial priorities was the need for the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) to exercise fiscal restraint and prioritize responsible financial planning for 2026-2030. Specific suggestions include capping tax requisition increases at the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate or CPI plus up to 2%, and limiting capital expenditures to essential infrastructure needs. A significant number of respondents felt that taxpayers are currently overburdened. There were suggestions for limiting non-allocated reserve contributions and reducing the magnitude of future tax increases for a more sustainable taxation level.

Some respondents suggested greater transparency and accountability in financial allocations by:

- requiring clear guidelines and justifications for budget increases,
- improving public understanding and trust in the RDN's fiscal management, and
- ensuring funds for unfilled personnel positions are not used without formal approval.

There is strong support for prioritizing expenditures carefully, focusing on:

- essential services and infrastructure, particularly water and waste management, and
- deferring non-essential projects until operating expenses are controlled.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of balancing community needs with taxpayer affordability. Suggestions include improving public transit access for specific areas, focusing on the environment and maintaining parks were specifically mentioned. As well, Healthcare and additional healthcare facilities were a priority for some.

There were several comments received in relation to services or areas outside of the RDN jurisdiction including road maintenance and safety and healthcare planning and reducing 'wait' times. As well as comments for the City of Nanaimo related to cleaner and safer streets, specific parks and events.

The verbatim input received through the survey and in an email received with additional comments can be viewed in appendix 1.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to receiving this report. The Board will consider all matters it deems relevant in approving its 2026-2030 Financial Plan, including matters raised by the respondents summarized in this report.

REVIEWED BY:

- T. Moore, Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Services
- C. Crabtree, General Manager, Corporate Services
- D. Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

1. RDN Budget Talks Survey of Your 2026-2030 Financial Plan Priorities What We Heard Engagement Summary Report