



November 27, 2025

Mayor and Council
District of Saanich
770 Vernon Avenue
Saanich, BC V8X 2W7

Dear Mayor Murdock and Council:

Re: Greater Victoria Public Library 2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

The Greater Victoria Public Library respectfully submits its 2026 Operating Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan for 2026-2030. As per the terms of the Library Operating Agreement, approval by council resolution is required by May 1, 2026.

The overall system-wide municipal funding increase requested for 2026 is 8%.

The District of Saanich's share of the 2026 requisition is \$7,413,138 (6.7%). This is based on converted assessment values and population of your municipality, including rental adjustment. A detailed breakdown of each member municipality's individual contribution is provided on pages 7 & 8 of the enclosed budget package. Budget drivers include salaries and benefits, library materials, building occupancy costs and other factors which are described in the attached 2026 budget notes.

As a core frontline service, GVPL is committed to supporting the overall health and well-being of our community amidst unprecedented pressures to adapt and respond to increasingly diverse needs and the challenges facing the most vulnerable. We are committed to supporting the wellbeing of our community by providing safe and inclusive spaces for all. Serving ten municipalities and more than 370,000 citizens, we deliver services through twelve branches, online platforms, and community outreach.

In difficult economic times, the public library becomes a lifeline – a place where people turn for learning, digital access and a sense of connection when they need it most. GVPL is proud of the work we do to strengthen communities. We look forward to sharing with you highlights of this past year and our plans for the future as outlined in [GVPL's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan](#).

Sincerely,


Shahira Khair
Board Chair


Maureen Sawa
CEO

cc: Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Saanich
Paul Arslan, Chief Financial Officer, District of Saanich
Melina Barnes, Assistant Director, Finance, Greater Victoria Public Library



GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

2026 Budget and 2026-2030 Five Year Financial Plan

Review / Approval Dates:

Review - Finance Committee: August 26, 2025

Review – Finance Committee: October 14, 2025

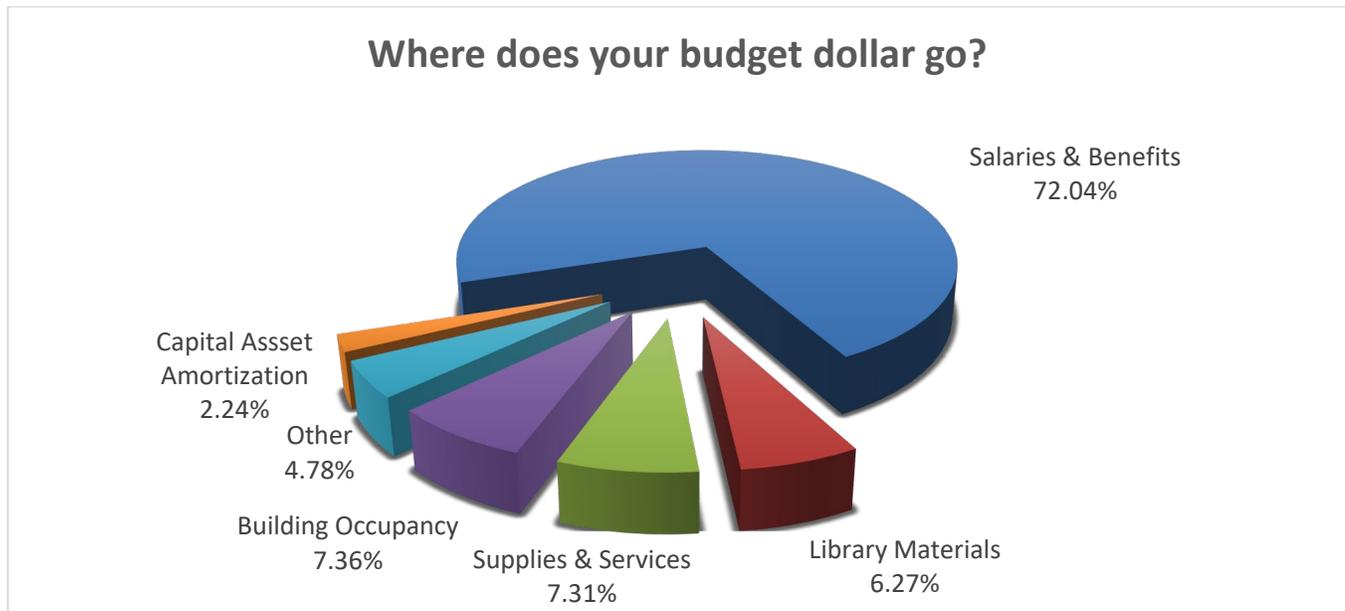
Approval – Board of Trustees: October 28, 2025

2026 Budget Executive Summary

Public libraries are a vital part of vibrant communities and support building strong local economies. The Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL) supports literacy and lifelong learning by providing free and equitable access to information, space, tools, and expertise. There are 12 branch locations within 10 local municipalities serving more than 380,000 residents. The virtual branch at gvpl.ca is open anytime, anywhere.

GVPL’s operating budget is funded primarily by our ten municipal partners, with remaining revenues from provincial and other grants. A key objective is to maintain municipal contribution increases within an acceptable range. As the role of public libraries has expanded dramatically in the past few years, budget increases are necessary to meet the growing needs of the communities we serve. GVPL is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our community by providing safe and inclusive spaces for all.

The Greater Victoria Public Library budget is allocated as illustrated below.



The Fiscal 2026 Budget will be impacted by a number of factors.

Staffing costs for the 2026 budget reflect a projected reduction in the vacancy rate along with increased service demands and expanded weekend operations. Planned staffing adjustments include increased supervisory support, additional People and Culture and IT resources to maintain weekend operations and strengthened safety and security initiatives such as enhanced training and emergency preparedness. GVPL continuously reviews staffing levels to ensure alignment with community needs. Staff investments are guided by GVPL’s commitment to operational excellence, equitable service across communities, and a safe, sustainable work environment for all employees.

Sunday operations costs, including both branch operations and support service costs, are included in the 2026 budget.

The current collective agreement expired on December 31, 2024, and negotiations are ongoing.

The five-year financial outlook anticipates additional salary and branch related cost increases in 2028 to support operations at the anticipated newly expanded Nellie McClung Branch. There are uncertainties related to the timing and costs of the new Nellie McClung branch development project. Any changes to the assumptions used to create the original estimates may result in unanticipated increases.

Costs related to existing branch service delivery and facilities related requirements are budgeted in 2026 and future years at 2025 service levels. Support costs for providing library services continue to increase due to escalating costs of collections, safety and security requirements and system infrastructure costs.

As with the 2025 Budget, the 2026 Budget utilizes Reserve funds for system and infrastructure projects, security improvements, facility projects and funding the first year of new FTEs.

Key increases:

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Total Budget - Funded	6.0%	3.4%	5.1%	2%	2%
Municipal Funding increase	8%	6.5%	6.5%	4.5%	3.5%

The cost drivers that result in the 6% increase for the 2026 Total Funded Budget are:

- Salaries inflation, new FTEs and decrease in estimated vacancy rate - \$1.63M
- Non-salary inflation and costs - \$268K
- Change in other funding sources (Grants, Donations) - \$140K
- Offset by increased use in Reserves - \$292K

GVPL is committed to operating efficiently and effectively to deliver library services to our 10 member municipalities. The library system leverages more than 100 active community partnerships to expand programs and lifelong learning opportunities for Greater Victoria residents. The Cost per Capita in the 2026 Budget is \$61.19, an increase from the 2025 Budget, \$57.58.



GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

BUDGET AT A GLANCE

	<u>2026</u>	<u>2025</u>
Total Budget - Funded ¹	\$ 26,753,194	\$ 23,323,204
Total Budget Increase (Decrease)	6.02%	7.24%
Operating Budget ²	\$ 26,645,078	\$ 25,102,972
Operating Budget Increase (Decrease) ³	6.47%	6.73%
Capital Budget	\$ 2,055,166	\$ 2,035,749
Capital Budget Increase (Decrease)	0.95%	13.42%
Municipal Contribution - Total	\$ 23,594,459	\$ 21,846,722
Municipal Contribution - Increase	\$ 1,747,737	\$ 1,138,929
Municipal Contribution - Increase (%)	8.00%	5.50%
Funded from Municipal Cont. (%)	88.19%	86.58%
Use of Reserves	\$ 1,924,080	\$ 1,687,027
Funded from Reserves (%)	7.20%	7.97%
Other sources of Revenues	\$ 1,234,655	\$ 1,374,454
Funded from Other Revenues (%)	4.61%	5.45%
Cost per Capita ⁴	\$ 61.19	\$ 57.58
Cost per Capita Increase ⁵	\$ 4.53	\$ 3.00
Population (Member Municipalities) ⁶	385,596	379,404

Note 1 – Total budget funded is equal to Expenses (Operating budget) less amortization (non-funded expense) plus capital budget

Note 2 – Operating budget consists of operating expenses only

Note 3 – Net of Amortization

Note 4 – Municipal Contribution Total divided by Population

Note 5 – Municipal Contribution Increase divided by Population

Note 6 – As per BC Stats, 2024 Sub-Provincial Population Estimates



2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Change%</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>2030</u>
Revenues									
Municipal Contributions - Operating	\$ 21,846,722	23,594,459	\$ 1,747,738	8.00%	1	\$ 25,128,099	\$ 26,761,426	\$ 27,965,690	\$ 28,944,489
Municipal Contributions - Start-up	-	-	-		2	-	-	-	-
Provincial Grants	712,372	678,372	(34,000)	-4.8%	3	678,372	678,372	678,372	678,372
Federal Grants	-	-	-	0.0%		-	-	-	-
Fees and Misc.	25,757	29,400	3,643	14.1%	4	29,400	29,400	29,400	29,400
Contracts for Service	32,890	32,890	-	0.0%	5	32,890	32,890	32,890	32,890
Investment Income	400,000	400,000	-	0.0%	6	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Donations and Other Grants	203,436	93,993	(109,443)	-53.8%	7	94,043	94,084	94,125	94,168
	23,221,176	24,829,114	1,607,938	6.9%		26,362,804	27,996,171	29,200,477	30,179,319
Expenses (Operating Budget)									
Salaries and Benefits	17,486,121	19,194,782	1,708,661	9.8%	8	20,541,867	21,813,464	22,249,733	22,694,728
Library Materials	1,624,966	1,671,447	46,481	2.9%	9	1,713,233	1,747,498	1,782,448	1,818,097
Amortization	1,905,517	1,947,000	41,483	2.2%	10	1,947,000	1,947,000	1,947,000	1,947,000
Supplies and Services	2,229,537	1,960,256	(269,281)	-12.1%	11	1,639,013	1,670,793	1,703,209	1,736,273
Building Occupancy	1,271,002	1,274,241	3,240	0.3%	12	1,304,847	1,318,517	1,344,888	1,371,785
Other Expenses	585,829	597,352	11,523	2.0%	13	612,285	624,531	637,022	649,762
	25,102,972	26,645,078	1,542,107	6.1%		27,758,246	29,121,803	29,664,299	30,217,645
Annual Surplus/(Deficit)	(1,881,795)	(1,815,964)	65,831	-3.5%		(1,395,442)	(1,125,632)	(463,822)	(38,326)
Add back: Unfunded Amortization	1,905,517	1,947,000	41,483	2.2%	11	1,947,000	1,947,000	1,947,000	1,947,000
	23,722	131,036	107,314			551,558	821,368	1,483,178	1,908,674
Total Budget - Funded	25,233,204	26,753,194	1,519,991	6%		27,664,115	29,064,730	29,645,024	30,236,925
Total Budget - Funded increase	7.24%	6.02%				3.40%	5.06%	2.00%	2.00%
Municipal Contributions-Operating Increase	5.50%	8.00%				6.50%	6.50%	4.50%	3.50%
Municipal Contributions-Estimated Increase from prior year		4.00%				3.50%	3.00%	3.00%	



2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>	<u>2029</u>	<u>2030</u>
Balance forward from Page 1	23,722	131,036	107,314		551,558	821,368	1,483,178	1,908,674
Capital Expenses								
Library Materials - Operating	1,364,249	1,398,541	34,292	2.5% 9	1,433,505	1,462,175	1,491,418	1,521,246
Hardware - Operating	300,000	345,000	45,000	15.0% 14	100,000	102,000	104,040	106,121
Shelving - Operating	80,000	82,400	2,400	14	84,460	86,149	87,872	89,630
Furniture and Equipment - Operating	216,000	151,410	(64,590)	-29.9% 14	155,195	158,299	161,465	164,694
Building Improvement - Operating	75,500	77,765	2,265	3.0% 14	79,709	81,303	82,929	84,588
Vehicles - Operating	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Branch Start-ups:								
Library Materials	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	2,035,749	2,055,116	19,367		1,852,869	1,889,926	1,927,725	1,966,279
Transfers								
Transfer to Replacement Reserve	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Transfer from Replacement Reserve	(400,000)	(412,000)	(12,000)		(422,300)	(430,746)	(394,547)	(7,606)
Transfer from Contingency Reserve	(175,986)	(437,080)	(261,094)		(579,011)	(587,812)	-	-
Transfer from Personnel Contingency Reserve	(481,041)	(400,000)	81,041		(200,000)	-	-	-
Transfer from Consulting Reserve	(200,000)	(400,000)	(200,000)		(100,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
Transfer from ITS Reserve	(430,000)	(275,000)	155,000		-	-	-	-
Transfer from Library Materials Reserve	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Transfer from Enhancement Reserve	(325,000)	-	325,000		-	-	-	-
Transfer to/(from) Reserves	(2,012,027)	(1,924,080)	87,947	15	(1,301,311)	(1,068,558)	(444,547)	(57,606)
Transfer to/(from) Accumulated Surplus	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Debt repayments	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
Financed assets	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
	(2,012,027)	(1,924,080)	87,947		(1,301,311)	(1,068,558)	(444,547)	(57,606)
Financial Plan Balance	(0)	-	0		-	-	(0)	0
Reserve Balance	6,877,306	4,953,226			3,651,915	2,583,357	2,138,810	2,081,204



2026 MUNICIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS

	2025		2026					
	Share 2025 (*1)	Total Requisition 2025	Share 2026	Operating Budget	Rent Adjustment (*2)	Total Requisition 2026	Increase	
							\$	%
Central Saanich	5.09%	\$1,121,007	5.05%	\$1,191,520	\$8,939	\$1,200,459	\$79,452	7.10%
Colwood	5.33%	1,171,585	5.44%	1,283,539	7,307	1,290,846	119,260	10.20%
Esquimalt	5.19%	1,129,124	5.18%	1,222,193	-4,819	1,217,374	88,250	7.80%
Highlands	0.76%	167,057	0.71%	167,521	953	168,474	1,417	0.80%
Langford	13.38%	2,941,210	13.96%	3,293,786	18,914	3,312,700	371,490	12.60%
Metchosin	1.52%	334,090	1.50%	353,917	1,993	355,910	21,820	6.50%
Oak Bay	6.02%	1,309,570	5.93%	1,399,151	-5,720	1,393,431	83,862	6.40%
Saanich	31.91%	6,945,630	31.53%	7,439,333	-26,195	7,413,138	467,508	6.70%
Victoria	27.73%	6,055,558	27.64%	6,521,508	-2,564	6,518,944	463,386	7.70%
View Royal	3.07%	671,890	3.06%	721,990	1,192	723,182	51,292	7.60%
Total	100%	\$21,846,722	100%	\$23,594,459	\$0	\$23,594,459	\$1,747,737	8.00%

1 - % Share calculated before Rent Adjustment to be comparative to 2026

2 - The **Rent Adjustment** is calculated in accordance with Section 8.12 (a), (b) and (c) of the Library Operating Agreement and relates to portions of buildings used to benefit all member municipalities: the Collection and Technical Services section of the Juan de Fuca Branch building and the Administrative portion of the Central Branch building. Municipalities which did not contribute to the initial acquisition of such building or who did not subsequently purchase a portion of such building pays reasonable rent to those Municipalities that did.



2026 MUNICIPAL PER CAPITA CONTRIBUTIONS

	2026				
	Total Requisition 2026	Population ¹	Cost Per Capita 2026	Increase per capita	increase
Central Saanich	\$1,200,459	18,150	66.14	\$4.38	\$79,452
Colwood	\$1,290,846	22,151	58.27	\$5.38	\$119,260
Esquimalt	\$1,217,374	19,302	63.07	\$4.57	\$88,250
Highlands	\$168,474	2,618	64.35	\$0.54	\$1,417
Langford	\$3,312,700	58,320	56.80	\$6.37	\$371,490
Metchosin	\$355,910	5,331	66.76	\$4.09	\$21,820
Oak Bay	\$1,393,431	18,813	74.07	\$4.46	\$83,862
Saanich	\$7,413,138	125,436	59.10	\$3.73	\$467,508
Victoria	\$6,518,944	102,856	63.38	\$4.51	\$463,386
View Royal	\$723,182	12,619	57.31	\$4.06	\$51,292
Total	\$23,594,459	385,596	\$61.19	\$4.53	\$1,747,737

¹ Source of population figures - BC Stats website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/people-population-community/population/population-estimates>, 2024, accessed July 2025

General note: Percentage share of costs by municipality are determined based on 50% property assessment value and 50% population estimate. More detailed information on assessment values and population are available on request.

Notes to the 2026 Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan

Components of the 2026 budget include the following:

1. **Municipal Contributions – Operating**

Increase \$1,747,738 or 8.0%

2. **Municipal Contributions – Start-up**

Nil

This line item represents any funds made available within the operating budget specifically identified for a new branch or relocation of an existing branch. Nellie McClung Express branch start-up costs were incurred in 2025. No costs have been included for the start-up costs for the new Nellie McClung branch or any other alternative service delivery.

3. **Provincial Grants**

Decrease \$34,000

Regular Provincial funding (operating) for public libraries in British Columbia is based on the base funding received in 2025. The 2025 budget included the use of \$34K of Provincial funding received in prior years for the Esquimalt digital media lab.

4. **Fees and Misc.**

Increase \$3,643

This revenue category included revenue relating to fees, meeting room rentals and printing. The 2026 Budget includes revenue related to fees only. Policies and procedures related to printing and meeting room rentals are under review.

5. **Contracts for Service**

No Change

This is an annual payment from the Capital Regional District for service delivery relating to the Juan de Fuca Electoral District. (Willis Point, Durrance, Malahat).

6. **Investment Income**

No change

Investment revenue is conservatively estimated to reflect projected continuation of modest earnings in the Municipal Finance Authority bond fund and returns for secured GIC's and operating bank interest that reflect current and anticipated interest rates.

7. **Donations and Other Grants**

Decrease \$109,443

Donations and grants can vary from year to year and are dependent on specific funded programs and services planned during the year. Donations specific to collections are not included as the related collections cost is also excluded. New funding opportunities will continue to be explored.

8. Salaries and Benefits**Increase \$1,708,661**

Labour is budgeted at full scheduled hours. Sunday openings based on five branches open for seven months in 2026 have been included. Staff gapping or an estimation of vacancies is included in the budget.

- Increases relate to:
 - Estimated contractually negotiated uplifts (potential) - \$700K including benefits.
 - Additional or increased budgeted positions - \$545K including benefits.
 - Planning for a lower vacancy rate - \$387K
- Personnel Reserve is being utilized to partially fund the cost increase in 2026 \$400K and 2027 \$200K.
- Salaries and Benefits FTE increases include positions that support safety and security and service delivery:
 - Library Services \$286K
 - 3.4 FTEs – 2nd Branch Supervisor at Central Branch Library; 2 Circulation Assistants and 1 Page (safety/security req.)
 - People and Culture \$140K
 - 1 FTE HR Advisor
 - CEO and Senior Leadership Team Executive support - \$56K
 - 0.5 FTE
 - Information Technology (IT) Helpdesk and IT Specialist support \$63K
 - 0.4 increase to current P/T positions; 0.2 increase to IT Specialist

9. Library Materials (Collections) (Expense and Capital)**Increase Expense – eResources and Digital Assets \$46,481****Increase Capital – Physical Materials \$34,292**

The library materials(collections) budget is split between expenses for digital and eResources and capital for books, audio visual and other physical formats which are capitalized as assets and amortized over 7 years.

10. Amortization**Increase \$41,483**

This is the estimated amortization expense for tangible capital assets, in accordance with the Board's Tangible Capital Asset policy. Since this is an unfunded expense, it is added back to the budgeted annual surplus and does vary year over year depending on capital asset purchases and disposals.

11. Supplies and Services**Decrease \$269,281**

The decrease is related to specific one-time initiatives, funded by Reserves in 2025.

Ongoing supplies and services costs that are funded by Municipalities include general and office supplies, telephone, networks, subscription and licensing, professional fees, advertising, printer paper, moving costs and shuttle fuel. This category also includes furniture, computers and other equipment and peripherals under \$1000. The primary reasons for the increase in ongoing costs in this category are related to higher professional services, furniture and equipment moving, and health & safety.

12. Building Occupancy
Increase \$3,240

Building occupancy includes building maintenance, security, recycling and refuse collection and utilities. The main cost driver in this category is security services.

13. Other Expenses
Increase \$11,523

Other expenses include insurance, employee recruitment costs, training, and business travel expenses. Printer lease, copy costs and paper are also included in this category. The increase is driven by inflation.

14. Capital Expenditures (Library Materials, Hardware, Shelving, Furniture and Equipment, Building Improvement, Vehicles)
Increase \$19,367

Capital expenditures increases are primarily due to increased IT hardware replacement costs, which are mainly funded by Reserves.

15. Transfer to/(from) Reserves
Change in Net Transfer from Reserves (\$87,947)

The 2026 budget continues to utilize Reserve balances to augment funding for facilities upgrades, implementation of security initiatives and information technology infrastructure; as well as Occupational Health and Safety compliance and phase two of the updated website/virtual branch infrastructure project. Transfers to and from reserves are approved by the Board of Trustees through the Budget approval process or specific briefing notes.



GREATER VICTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Appendix 1 - Reserve Fund Balances

Reserve Fund	Dec 2024 Balance	2024 Surplus Alloc	Jan 1/25 Balance	Planned 2025	2026 Budget	Planned 2027-2030	Forecasted Balance 2030
Replacement	1,768,274	200,000	1,968,274	(400,000)	(412,000)	(1,255,199)	(98,925)
Personnel	1,429,462	-	1,429,462	-	(400,000)	(200,000)	829,462
Library Material	712,185	24,119	736,304	-	-	-	736,304
ITS Replacement	780,255	363,000	1,143,255	(789,000)	(275,000)	-	79,255
Consulting Reserve	838,794	50,000	888,794	(205,000)	(400,000)	(250,000)	33,794
Contingency	2,187,363	112,471	2,299,834	-	(437,080)	(1,166,823)	695,931
BC Enhancement Grants)	1,147,703	40,095	1,187,798	(1,187,798)	-	-	-
Total Reserve Funds	8,864,036	789,685	9,653,721	(2,581,798)	(1,924,080)	(2,872,022)	2,275,821
Capital Improvement Fund			1,903,612				1,903,612
Total Reserve and Unrestricted Funds			11,557,333	(2,581,798)	(1,924,080)	(2,872,022)	4,179,433