

# ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

From Jen McCutcheon, Director, Electoral Area A

Nov  
2022

## Director's Report

Hello Electoral Area residents,

Thank you! It truly is an honour to be able to continue in my role as your Electoral Area Director for another term. Thank you to everyone who came out and voted, and for all those who live in our communities but are not able to vote but provided your support in other ways. During this past term, my learning curve was steep, both on the specific policies and issues that I faced, and also on how best to use my voice to advocate effectively for the electoral area, and for the region as a whole.

The election campaign was a excellent opportunity for me to meet and engage with residents, and listen to their questions, suggestions and concerns. It was also a good time to think about the coming four years, and what my priorities are for this term. My work includes policy, infrastructure and programmatic decisions that impact the whole Metro Vancouver region, as well as a very local focus on the UBC and UEL communities (as well as the other unique communities across electoral area A, such as Barnston Island).

At the regional level, my priorities for this term are in the areas of climate action, reconciliation, and regional development. On climate action, science and lived experience here in BC demand bolder and faster action on climate action and mitigation, as well as environmental protection and green solutions. In the area of reconciliation, I believe that we are finally reaching a tipping point, where Indigenous leaders are starting to be invited to the table as equals, and that the concerns and wisdom of Indigenous people on whose land we have settled are being taken seriously. I am committed to progressing dialogue and action toward reconciliation. One practical way that I am tackling this is through my role on TransLink's Indigenous Relations Task force. Finally, in the face of a rapidly growing region, the way in which we develop the region is critical. We need to preserve our green spaces and rural (farm) lands, maintaining the urban containment boundary to prevent urban sprawl , while building smarter, more sustainable industrial and residential buildings.

Locally, my priority is to continue to advocate and coordinate around areas of concern for residents. At present, these include:

- Increasing safe active transportation routes and safer streets for pedestrians and bikers
- Advocating to the school district and province for more school and daycare availability
- Working with the province (Ministry of Municipal Affairs) around changes in governance within the UEL
- Advocating for a stronger focus on climate action, environmental protection and sustainability within the university neighbourhoods (through Campus Vision 2050).



*Nervously heading UHill secondary to cast my vote on October 15<sup>th</sup> (with my husband and son)*



*Jen and her family enjoying a fall family hike*

I also hope to continue to engage with residents through a variety of ways, including individual or group meetings (I welcome the opportunity to connect with you over a cup of tea, a walk, or if needed, a Zoom call), engagement sessions, and these monthly newsletters. Please don't hesitate to reach out just to say hello, or to share your questions, suggestions, or concerns that I may be able to assist with.

This month's newsletter is a little shorter than some, as the transitions from "old" boards and committees is still underway. As a result of this, fewer meetings have occurred, and I am still waiting to find out what regional boards and committees I will be appointed or elected to. I still hope that you will find some interesting nuggets of information.

Finally, before I sign off, I wanted to take a moment to thank a few individuals who were particularly instrumental in my work over this past term. I appreciate the hours of guidance, expertise and wisdom that Maria Harris and Bill Holmes provided, especially during my early days as Director. I am also grateful to Mike Feeley, my alternate, as well as Claire Huxtable and Dulcy Anderson for their collaborative support and insights as we worked toward practical and creative solutions that I hope benefited local communities and the region as a whole.

Thank you again for your trust in me to continue as your Electoral Area director.

All the best,

*Jen McCutcheon*

*Jen McCutcheon, Metro Vancouver Director for Electoral Area A ([www.areaajen.ca](http://www.areaajen.ca) or [areaajen@gmail.com](mailto:areaajen@gmail.com))*

## Opportunity to have your say in improvements to the UEL's Multifamily Public Realm

The University Endowment Lands has opened a survey to determine priorities for improvements to public spaces in the multifamily area, which is the area south of University Boulevard, near Staples. You do not have to be a resident of the area to respond to the survey. The survey includes an opportunity to suggest various improvements, including potential traffic calming measures (speed bumps, one-way streets) as traffic speed has been a concern for residents and parents of children attending local schools. Additionally, the appearance of the area around the Village shopping area could be improved, solving the problem of muddy puddles throughout the winter and supporting the trees. Please take a few moments to complete the survey and contribute whatever you think would make the public spaces safe and enjoyable for all!

Click [here](https://forms.gle/uoTpTicGhEyr7GG56) to complete the survey. (<https://forms.gle/uoTpTicGhEyr7GG56>)





## Budget

The big item that the outgoing Metro Vancouver board has been working on, and recently approved is the 2023 regional district budget, and the 2023 - 2027 Metro Vancouver Financial Plan. After months of planning and discussion, the approved plan maintains the goals and objectives of Metro Vancouver while removing the use of financial levers that were utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize increases on ratepayers. Further, this budget represents a pause to assess the implications of the rapidly evolving macro-economic environment and to undertake strategic planning with the incoming Board of Directors. The multi-year outlook for the financial plan currently shows larger increases to the budget in future years, which is something that the Board agreed needs to be addressed and decreased early in the new Board's term.

While considered a pause, the 2023 budget still contains provisions to address key Board strategic priorities such as Climate action, Asset Management, Metro 2050, Regional Parks Land Acquisition, Accelerated action on Invest Vancouver, and Indigenous Relations.



The 2023 budget has total operating expenditures of \$1.082 Billion and expected capital cashflow of 1.247 Billion. For the year, the average household impact is projected to increase by \$26 for a total of \$620. This represents a 4.5% increase over the prior year, down from the 10.1% projected for 2023 in the previous financial planning cycle.

Key highlights of the overall Metro Vancouver 2023 budget are as follows:

- A reduction of \$22 million of the total 2023 Metro Vancouver proposed operating budget compared to that previously projected for 2023
- Maintained or increased contribution to capital and reserves for key functions
- Reduced capital cash flow for 2023 and 2024
- Reduction of household impact, \$33 less than that previously projected for 2023

At the local level, the Electoral Area Service 2023 operating budget will decrease by \$(68,515) for a total budget of \$729,126. This decrease is largely because the previous year (2022) included local government election-related costs.

The 2023 operating budget includes the following key actions:

- receive and consider next steps related to Phase 2 of the geotechnical study of the rural and remote portions of Electoral Area A
- receive and consider the Electoral Area A Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Plan
- consider Community Works Fund projects identified by the UEL community



- continue to administer the building, zoning, official community plan, and unsightly premise and nuisance bylaw
- communicate with Electoral Area residents through the Electoral Area Bulletin and Electoral Area Director's Update
- engage the UBC/UEL communities on liquor license and retail cannabis referrals, and participate in the Province's UEL Governance Study
- continue to offer staff support to the Electoral Area Board Director;
- facilitate emergency management education for resident

For more information on the budget and financial planning process, you can watch [this](https://vimeo.com/446969125) informative video (<https://vimeo.com/446969125>), or review the budget and financial plan [here](http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/programs-budget/Pages/default.aspx) (<http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/programs-budget/Pages/default.aspx>)

## UBC RCMP Update

At the most recent UNA Board meeting, RCMP Staff Sergeant Chuck Lam presented to the Board on RCMP updates for the past three months. Here were some of his key points.

### Wreck Beach Season

- Busy beach season that has continued to attract beach users due to the usual good weather
- Addressed open consumption of alcohol through education and enforcement.
- Worked closely with Metro Vancouver Parks to ensure the beach is an inviting and safe place for users



*Image from UBC RCMP website*

### Start of the school year

- Increase in bike thefts. Culprits are brazen openly using bolt cutters and cordless grinders to defeat bike locks. Police arrested a male was arrested for theft last Wed Oct 19 for cutting locks on bikes while students stood and watched
- Increased theft of backpacks, laptops, wallets, ID, etc.
- AMS block party and outdoor concert. 6500 people attended. It went well with no issues

### Mental Health

- Increase in mental health calls.
- Students are finding the stress of school, being away from family, having lack of friends around, is having an impact on their mental health. Many of these people suffering from mental health episodes are assessed and apprehend if warranted and taken to VGH for medical help





#### Aquatic Centre

- Increase in thefts from locker due people not paying a loonie for the use of locks.

#### Traffic Initiative

- Dedicated road safety initiative through ICBC funding for speed, intersection, pedestrian, distracted driving, and impaired driving offences
- Sept 26, 2021 impaired double fatal collision update: Sept 7, 2022, 6 charges of impaired driving and dangerous driving causing death were laid against Tim Goerner after a collision that killed two first year UBC students
- This was a complex and involved investigation

#### Homicide at UBC Golf Course Oct 17

- 38-year-old male was shoot and killed in the parking lot of the golf course
- 3 suspect males arrested in Richmond after a vehicle was found on fire in Vancouver shortly after the shooting
- IHIT has taken over the investigation

You can follow updates from the UBC RCMP [here](https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2259&contentId=-1&detachmentDataId=43603) (https://bc-cb.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=2259&contentId=-1&detachmentDataId=43603)

### Spawning Salmon have Returned to Spanish Bank Creek!



*Two adult Chum salmon returning to Spanish Banks Creek*

While this story refers to sometime on the boarder of Electoral Area A, I thought that it was too exciting not to share! Chum salmon are currently returning to Spanish Bank Creek to spawn! These incredible animals are born in the creek, head out to the North Pacific for 3-6 years, and then return to their same creek to spawn and then die. The carcass of the dead salmon are rich in nutrients and energy that feed animals such as eagles, and also enrich our forests. The carcasses also improve newly hatched salmon growth and survival by contributing nitrogen and phosphorous compounds to streams.

Spanish Creek, leading out of Pacific Spirit Regional Park into the Ocean at Spanish Banks is one of the few aquatic ecosystems in the city that still flow as surface water, as most of Vancouver's natural streams have

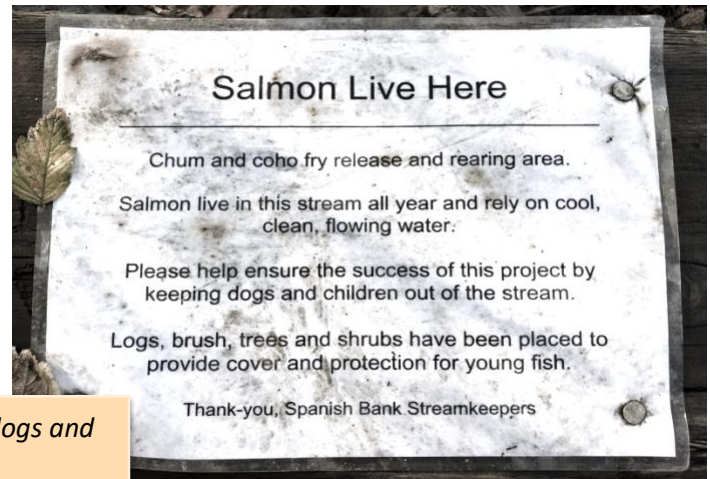
been buried. These special salmon streams are rare and face many challenges. If you take the opportunity to visit the stream, please respect it's sensitive habitat by keeping dogs and feet out of the stream year-round, and



Nov  
2022

especially now while the salmon are spawning. Even if you don't see any salmon, their delicate eggs may be present in the water, so please keep out of the stream and its immediate banks.

Information for this article came from the City of Vancouver ([vancouver.ca/streams](https://vancouver.ca/streams)) and the Pacific Salmon Foundation (<https://psf.ca/info/chum/>) and the US Department of fisheries (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/chum-salmon>)



*If you visit the creek, please keep all dogs and humans away from the creek.*

## Waste Not Want Not – are you interested in getting involved?

A few UNA residents (including me) are starting up a group that will come together to build community and take local action against climate change and in support of environmental protection. You can read more below, and feel free to email me if you would like to learn more or to join us.

The purpose of this group is to come together to take action for our planet. Our specific focus is on simple actions that reduce consumerism, decrease our carbon footprint, and strengthen connections to our earth and among community members. We will do this by sharing practical skills, knowledge and curiosity and in so doing we will increase our confidence and be more self-sustainable.

We plan to bring together like-minded neighbours through projects such as:

- Reduce waste - repair, repurpose through woodworking, sewing, DIY
- Inspire - nature walks, plant identification, foraging
- Reduce food miles - farm to table food prep, preserving/fermenting
- Reduce greenhouse gases - vegan food sharing, basketry
- Urban gardening - making compostable pots, sharing soil and seeds, growing Indigenous plants and other edible foods



For each topic that the group decides to focus on, we will rely on the knowledge and expertise of our community, and where needed, we will engage experts such as Indigenous knowledge keepers or others with specific expertise to help guide our learning and doing.





In addition to coming together to overcome the feeling of helplessness in the face of the climate crisis, a main purpose of this group will be to come together as a community to connect and share knowledge and expertise and build momentum around simple but meaningful change that will benefit the planet. While each small action on its own may not seem significant, each action creates momentum and a shared sense of action and hopefulness for a better future for our earth. If you are interested in learning more, contact Jen at [areaajen@gmail.com](mailto:areaajen@gmail.com).

### Family Forest Art in Pacific Spirit Park this Saturday

Join the Pacific Spirit Park Society for a guided family forest walk and create nature mandalas inspired by shapes and patterns in the forest.

Space limited to 12 children (plus their caregivers/family).

Registration is required by scanning the QR code.

Email: [volunteer@pacificspiritparksociety.org](mailto:volunteer@pacificspiritparksociety.org)

[www.pacificspiritparksociety.org](http://www.pacificspiritparksociety.org)

Date: Saturday, Nov 5 from 10–11:30 AM

Age Range: 8–12

Admission by donation

Where: Cleveland Trail, North side of West 16<sup>th</sup> Ave



### Sustainability Lunch and Learn on Climate Anxiety and Wellbeing



On Tuesday, November 22 at noon, the UNA is hosting another (virtual) Sustainability Lunch and Learn. This one is on the topic of Climate Anxiety and Wellbeing.

Join this virtual Sustainability Session lunch & learn, exploring a variety of sustainability topics relevant to households and neighbourhoods of the University Neighborhoods Association.

As the climate changes we are experiencing more severe weather and health impacts, which can take its toll on our mental health. This month's Sustainability Session will dive into climate anxiety and how we can come together to make a difference. Led by facilitators from [UBC's Climate Hub](#), we'll discuss our own climate anxieties and worries, identify solutions to achieve wellbeing, and share resources to help ourselves and our community.

This workshop is free. [RSVP here](#).



### Jen's Board and Committee Appointments

Below are the boards and committees that I serve on. Feel free to reach out to me if you would like to learn more. Until the new Metro Vancouver Board Chair and Vice Chair have been elected, and new committees established, I am not sure which Metro Vancouver and TransLink committees I will be appointed to. I will update the list below as I learn more.

- Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors
- TransLink Mayors' Council for Regional Transportation
- TransLink's Indigenous Relations Taskforce
- Fraser Valley Regional Library Board of Directors
- Inaugural Board Member for Metro Vancouver Zero Emission Innovation Centre (ZEIC)
- Ocean Watch Action Committee

### Links & Connections

[Jen McCutcheon's Website](http://www.areaajen.ca)

[www.areaajen.ca](http://www.areaajen.ca)

[Jen McCutcheon's Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

[www.facebook.com/AreaAJen](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAJen)

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

[www.metrovancouver.org](http://www.metrovancouver.org)

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca)

[www.translink.ca](http://www.translink.ca)