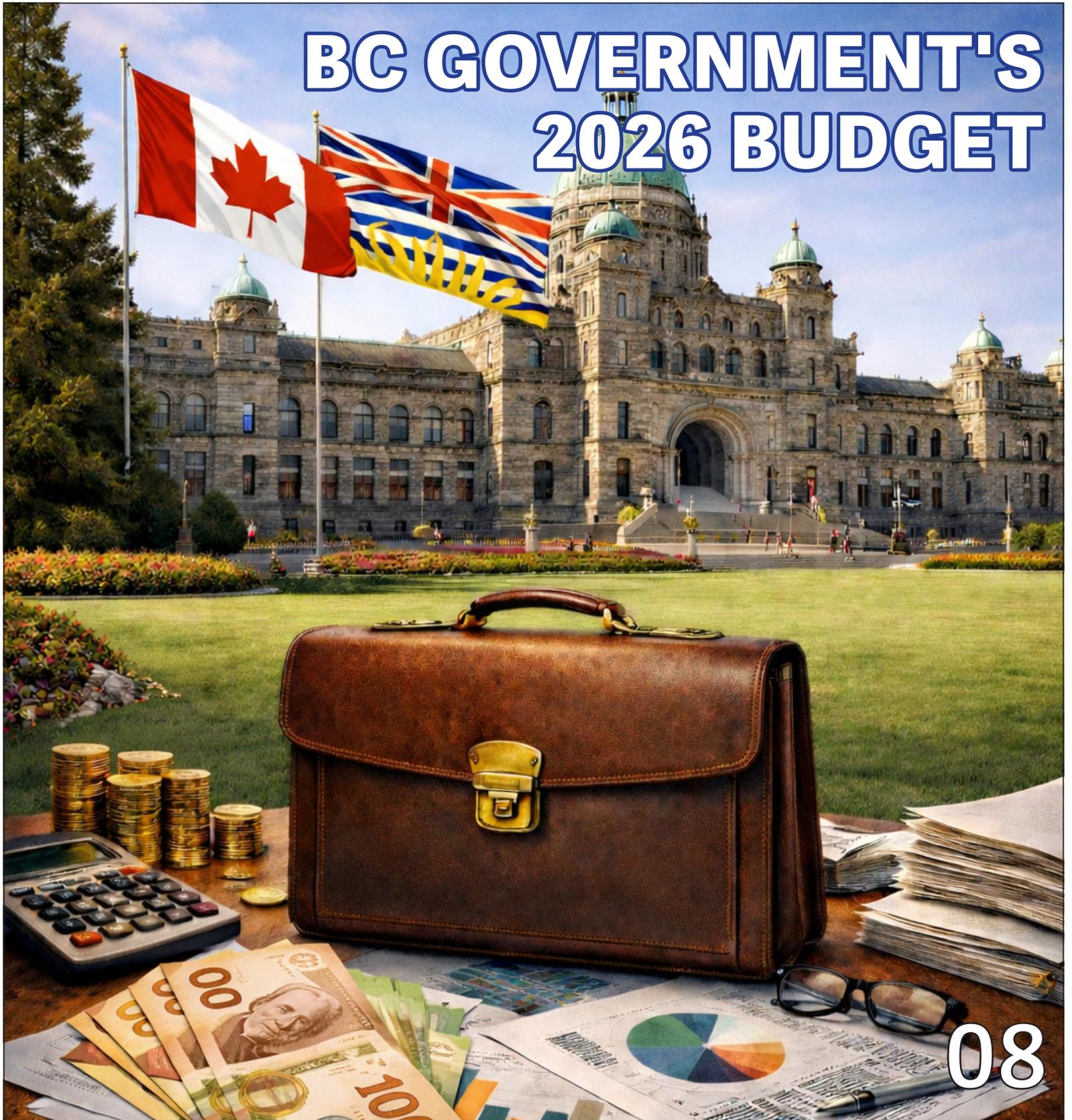




## BC GOVERNMENT'S 2026 BUDGET



# Mayor's Annual Address – February 5, 2026

## Advancing a Livable, Resilient Richmond

2025 will be etched in memory as the year when the Cowichan Lands decision was made by the Supreme Court of British Columbia. In BC, the year will also be remembered for when Canada engaged in a trade war with the USA, its long-time ally and biggest trading partner. For all communities, the past year was one of continued change and adjustment with pressures from interest rates, inflation and shifting market trends. Cities everywhere were among the first to feel the impact of rising demands for service, increased operating costs and evolving public expectations. Yet, despite these challenges, Richmond remained steady. The City's strong, diverse and resilient economy combined with commitments to careful planning, prudent financial management and disciplined investment helped buffer our community from broader financial pressures. City services remained stable while major infrastructure projects advanced as planned.

*Throughout the year, City Council and staff responded to emerging demands. We experienced continued development activity, high levels of participation in community programs and strong engagement across a range of initiatives. We look ahead with a sense of optimism. Through continued collaboration, thoughtful investment, organizational strength and a focus on community well-being, City Council will ensure that Richmond remains one of the most livable and forward-looking cities in Canada.*

### Economic and Community Outlook

Over the past year in the British Columbia economy, analysis confirmed moderate growth due to many factors. Rates of inflation began to ease, providing some relief to households and businesses. Although challenges continued in many sectors, this shift gradually strengthened consumer confidence. Richmond's local economy demonstrated stability. With one of the region's most diverse economies, Richmond experienced strong activity across industrial, commercial and service-based sectors. For instance, the number of issued Richmond business licences increased to more than 14,500 in 2025.

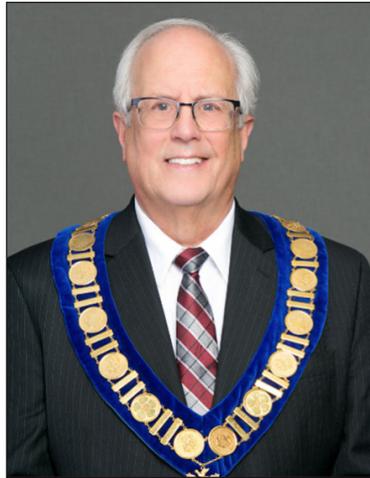
### City's Recognition as Canada's Most Active Community Challenge Showcases Lifestyle

Resident participation also remained strong throughout the year with more than 105,000 residents registered in City programs. This reflected consistent yearly growth for accessible, high quality community services. The City's recognition as Canada's Most Active Community in the ParticipACTION challenge further showcased the strength of local engagement and the importance of programs and amenities that support good health as well as active lifestyles.

Financially, the City remained focused on long-term stability. Despite rising operating and capital costs, Richmond's approach maintained a responsible financial position characterized by disciplined management of reserves, strategic investment and effective long-term planning for the future.

### Cowichan Lands Decision

In August, the Supreme Court of BC made an unprecedented decision in the case of Cowichan Tribes v Canada and others. The Court's decision involved a declaration of aboriginal title over 800 acres of land in southeast



**MAYOR MALCOLM BRODIE**

*Photo courtesy richmond.ca*

Richmond and, if unchallenged, may affect established fee simple ownership of private property under the Land Title Act throughout the Province. The decision introduced real uncertainty into the security of title to land in British Columbia.

Recognizing that the decision must be overturned rather than being negotiated away, the City of Richmond appealed the decision as did all other parties including the federal and provincial governments, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority as well as the Musqueam and Tsawwassen First Nations. The Cowichan First Nation also appealed and is seeking to expand the declared Aboriginal title area to cover the original 1,800 acre claim area. As the implications of the case raise important questions for homeowners, businesses, lenders, and communities, a number of other parties are expected to intervene in the appeal. The City held a large townhall meeting in late October for affected landowners and the public in order to outline the potentially far-reaching aspects of the decision. The significant impacts of this decision have attracted national and international attention. The City of Richmond will continue to inform affected landowners, residents and stakeholders as the City attempts to overturn the trial court decision.

### Housing

The provision of attainable housing was again one of the most significant areas of focus for City Council throughout the year. The City responded to changing provincial requirements, evolving development trends and the needs of a growing population. Council's long-standing commitment to supporting affordable housing and encouraging well-planned growth guided advancement of the City's Low End Market Rental ("LEMR") Program. Since 2007 this program has proven to be a successful tool for delivering below-market rental units. To date, hundreds of affordable units have been completed or are secured through development approvals with an additional 590 units under application. These units are important as they serve a wide range of residents including working families, seniors, young adults and others who rely on stable rental options to remain in the City. While working with non-profit partners to deliver affordable housing, the City has leveraged provincial and federal funding. Richmond's newly-formed Housing Office launched an online registry to better support residents searching for appropriate rental housing. Using this tool which mutually benefits residents and housing providers alike, residents can effectively view available and upcoming below-market rental units. Built on City-owned land in partnership with the Province and the Pathways Clubhouse, an 80-unit housing complex at the north end of No. 2 Road called Rio Vista is soon expected. This housing will assist single people, families and seniors with rental rates to accommodate either low or moderate-income households. Additionally, for women and their children living in difficult circumstances, the City contributed land to complement \$9.1 million federal funding through the CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative Program and \$7.2 million from the BC Housing Provincial fund. This secured 25 transitional units in Harbour House located at Steveston Highway and Railway. Recognizing the value of collaboration, the City expanded the Affordable Housing Non-Profit Partnership Program to include more than 20 organizations focused on seniors, families, women, newcomers and individuals experiencing housing insecurity. These groups meet regularly to share insights, coordinate efforts and identify opportunities to improve capacity, services and support for vulnerable residents. Funded by CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund, City Council approved a \$10 million Affordable Housing Grant Program to support five new affordable housing projects to more quickly deliver a total of 347 new units across the city. The program is designed to help non-profit housing providers bridge funding gaps, secure senior government contributions, and advance projects more quickly from planning to construction. By investing directly in these partnerships, the

## Mayor's Annual Address Cont'd

City is helping to ensure these units remain affordable and respond to local needs. This investment reinforces Richmond's long-standing commitment to increasing the supply of secure, affordable rental housing while working collaboratively with non-profit partners to deliver stable, community-focused housing solutions.

The City also continued planning for the Aberdeen Rental Residences, a project that includes over 200 affordable rental units near transit and major commercial areas. To be managed by the New Vista Society, this project will provide a mix of units suitable for seniors, families, individuals with disabilities and lower-income working households. Following several phases of public and stakeholder consultation in the last two years, Council made significant progress in updating the Official Community Plan (OCP) which guides the City's growth. There were additional incursions into local government autonomy for land use planning as the result of restrictions set out in provincial housing legislation. The first completed component of the OCP update focused on providing housing policies that promote affordability and more rental housing. Particularly along arterial roads and around existing shopping centres, the updated OCP aims to build more complete and connected neighbourhoods with more transportation and housing options alongside nearby shops, services, employment and amenities throughout the City. Also included are shorter-term, actionable policies that define implementation specific to Richmond, while at the same time complying with provincial housing legislation. As part of the process, the City's Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) map and related processes were updated to reflect environmental assets not provincially or federally protected. More updates to the OCP should be considered by Council in the spring.

### Expansion of Shelter Support

To provide for the growing demand by Richmond residents who have no home, support continued to expand in 2025 as the City worked closely with partners. Richmond House in the Ironwood area, the community's permanent emergency shelter, continues to operate at full capacity with 60 beds in addition to a waitlist, underscoring the need for additional shelter space. To supplement this capacity, two Temporary Winter Shelters were operated during the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 winter seasons, providing 35 additional spaces each night at South Arm Outdoor Pool and Brighthouse Pavilion. Operated every night from early November through late winter, these shelters offer safe, warm overnight accommodation, meals, washroom access, and connections to services. In 2025/2026, the shelters were fully funded by BC Housing and enhanced with new services, including morning transportation and daytime outreach to help connect clients with resources and follow-up on referrals. The 2025 Homeless Count identified 175 Richmond individuals without a home, an increase of 13 people since 2023. Most importantly, 59% of those identified were sheltered when counted, reflecting a significant increase in the number of sheltered individuals compared to previous years. These efforts demonstrate Richmond's strengthened ability to respond to the unhoused through coordinated partnerships and expanded shelter capacity along with a focus on safety, dignity, and connections to support.

### Infrastructure and Capital Projects

As an important component in maintaining safe, reliable and high quality services for residents in a growing community, Richmond continued to advance major infrastructure projects throughout 2025. The approved capital budget allows construction to progress on several major civic facilities. These include the \$174 million Works Yard Replacement Project which will, over the next decade, modernize one of the City's most important operations centres. To complicate the project throughout the period of construction, the existing Works Yard will continue to operate at full capacity to ensure uninterrupted provision of core services.

Significant progress was also made on the Steveston Community Centre and Library Replacement Project set to open later in 2026. This \$95

million LEED Gold certified facility will serve as a major community hub with modern and accessible spaces for recreation, learning and cultural programs. A number of alternative venues are being used to ensure uninterrupted service during construction. The Bowling Green Community Activity Centre recently opened to serve residents. This centre for lawn bowling has expanded for broader community use year-round. The West Richmond Pavilion is currently in the design phase and plans to achieve Passive House building certification, a leading international standard for energy-efficient, high-performance buildings. The Passive House concept focuses on smart design using high levels of insulation, airtight construction and high-performance windows to ensure year-round comfort with minimal mechanical heating or cooling. Such buildings typically achieve 70–90% energy savings compared to conventional facilities. Building users will enjoy stable indoor temperatures, clean air, and a quieter more comfortable building. For the City and broader community, it means lower long-term operating costs, reduced GHG emissions and a durable facility built to perform well over time. Across the city, renewal and replacement of basic infrastructure remained a priority.

### Community Safety

Community safety continued as an important priority for City Council throughout 2025. As one of the safest communities in Metro Vancouver, this reflects the work of our police, fire-rescue, bylaw and emergency management teams who provide strong, coordinated and professional service. Richmond RCMP advanced a number of important initiatives during the year. The detachment continued its focus on crime prevention, community engagement and targeted enforcement. Property crime remained an area of emphasis. Ongoing work with local businesses, community groups and volunteers combined with increased patrols, real-time information-sharing and proactive investigations helped reduce incidents in several categories including break and enters as well as shoplifting.

The Boost and Bust program supported retailers by identifying and apprehending repeat shoplifting offenders. Through these efforts, a significant amount of merchandise was recovered and a safer environment was created. The program reflects the RCMP's commitment to working directly with the community to address emerging concerns.

Road safety also remained a priority for the local detachment. Throughout 2025, officers delivered enforcement campaigns focused on distracted or impaired driving and excessive speed. These initiatives were supported by a large group of volunteers and community safety personnel who helped raise awareness at key locations. The combination of enforcement and education helped reduce high-risk behaviour and contributed to safer conditions on the roads.

Support for vulnerable residents continued to strengthen in 2025. The RCMP's Vulnerable Persons Unit worked closely with social service agencies to connect support services to individuals with no home, mental health challenges or personal crises. Regular outreach and early intervention helped reduce repeat calls for service and improved outcomes for individuals in need.

Mayor Brodie's Annual Address also included a report on: Parks, Recreation, Community – Technology, Modernization – Transportation, Engineering, Public Works – Climate, Sustainability, Environment and 2026 Looking Forward.

To read Mayor Brodie's Annual Address in full go to [www.richmond.ca/\\_shared/assetsw/2026mayorsaddress78432.pdf](http://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assetsw/2026mayorsaddress78432.pdf)

### Conclusion

As we look ahead in 2026 Richmond remains well-positioned to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented. The progress achieved in 2025 reflects the dedication of residents, community partners, volunteers, City Council and City staff who continue to work together to build a strong, inclusive and resilient community.

# OUR CITY

## Richmond

### NEWS UPDATE

by Florence Gordon



## Richmond residents invited to help shape Minoru Park's future renewal

Richmond, BC – From lakeside pathways and sports fields to a running track and community facilities, Minoru Park is one of Richmond's most actively used parks. The City of Richmond is updating the draft Minoru Park Vision Plan and invites the public to help shape the park's future.

The community is invited to share feedback until Sunday, March 29, 2026, on areas of the park that are aging, underused and could be improved such as pathways, entrances and other spaces. Feedback received will help shape new concept options for the Minoru Park Vision Plan, which will be shared for further feedback in the next phase of planning.

There are several opportunities for the public to participate, both in-person and online.

### In-person:

Attend one of three drop-in style open houses offering fun information sharing activities for all ages, display boards and engaging Parks staff, who will be available for discussions and to answer questions.

- **Monday, February 16 (BC Family Day)** from 10:00am to 5:00pm at the Richmond Cultural Centre, 7700 Minoru Gate (in the plaza as part of the Children's Arts Festival)
- **Tuesday, March 10** from 11:00am to 2:00pm at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, 7191 Granville Avenue (look for directional signage towards Multipurpose Room 1)
- **Thursday, March 19** from 3:00 to 6:00pm at Richmond Centre, 6551 No. 3 Road (in the new Park Plaza, which is located outside on the southwest corner of Richmond Centre, along the newly developed section of Park Road between Minoru Gate and Constable Jimmy Ng Road – look for the tents)

### Online:

- Visit [LetsTalkRichmond.ca/MinoruVisionPlan](https://LetsTalkRichmond.ca/MinoruVisionPlan) to learn more and complete the survey, available in multiple languages.
- The survey will be open until 11:59pm on Sunday, March 29, 2026.

Feedback from this Phase 1 public engagement process will help shape concept options for the Minoru Park Vision Plan, which will be shared with the community for input during Phase Two. Feedback from Phase Two will inform the updated Minoru Park Vision Plan, to be presented to Council for consideration.

Once approved, the Vision Plan will set the course for renewing Minoru Park, ensuring this vital park continues to be a place where the community can visit, connect and gather for decades to come.

For more information, contact the City's Parks Department at 604-244-1208 or at [parks@richmond.ca](mailto:parks@richmond.ca)

Photos courtesy richmond.ca



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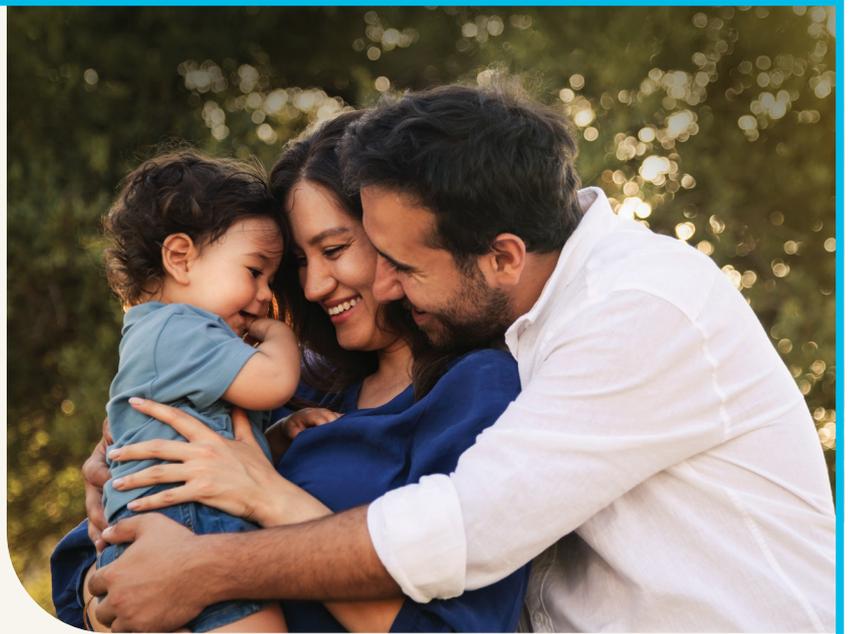


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## In honour of our soldiers: Kenneth Donald Reimer

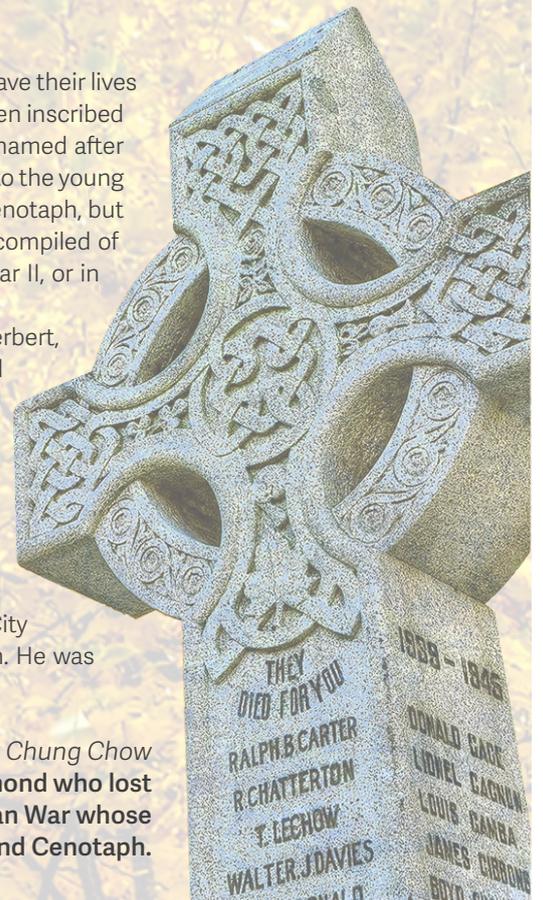
By MATTHEW CHEUNG  
Contributing writer



Courtesy Veterans.gc.ca

In our previous series, we learned about the 56 men who gave their lives during World War I and World War II, whose names had been inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph and had a poppy street sign named after them. Following our poppy street sign series, we moved onto the young soldiers whose names were inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph, but did not have a road named after them. Those names are compiled of 23 young men who lost their lives in World War I, World War II, or in the Korean War.

Kenneth Donald Reimer was born on August 3, 1931 in Herbert, Saskatchewan to Lulu Island, Richmond BC's own David and Elizabeth Reimer, and brother of Gayleen and Audrey Reimer, who somehow found their way to Saskatchewan. At the age of 17, Kenneth enlisted into the Royal Canadian Air Force on September 8, 1948 in Vancouver. For nearly two years, he was a part of the RCAF Station Chatham and served as a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force before he died on August 25, 1950. The details of his death are unknown, but his relation to Richmond prompted the City of Richmond to add his name to the Richmond Cenotaph. He was buried in Burnaby's Ocean View Burial Park, BC.



File photo by Chung Chow

**Kenneth Donald Reimer, was one of 23 young men from Richmond who lost their lives in either World War I, World War II, or in the Korean War whose names were inscribed on the Richmond Cenotaph.**



# RCMP

## Crime Map Jan. 23, 2025 - Feb. 20, 2026

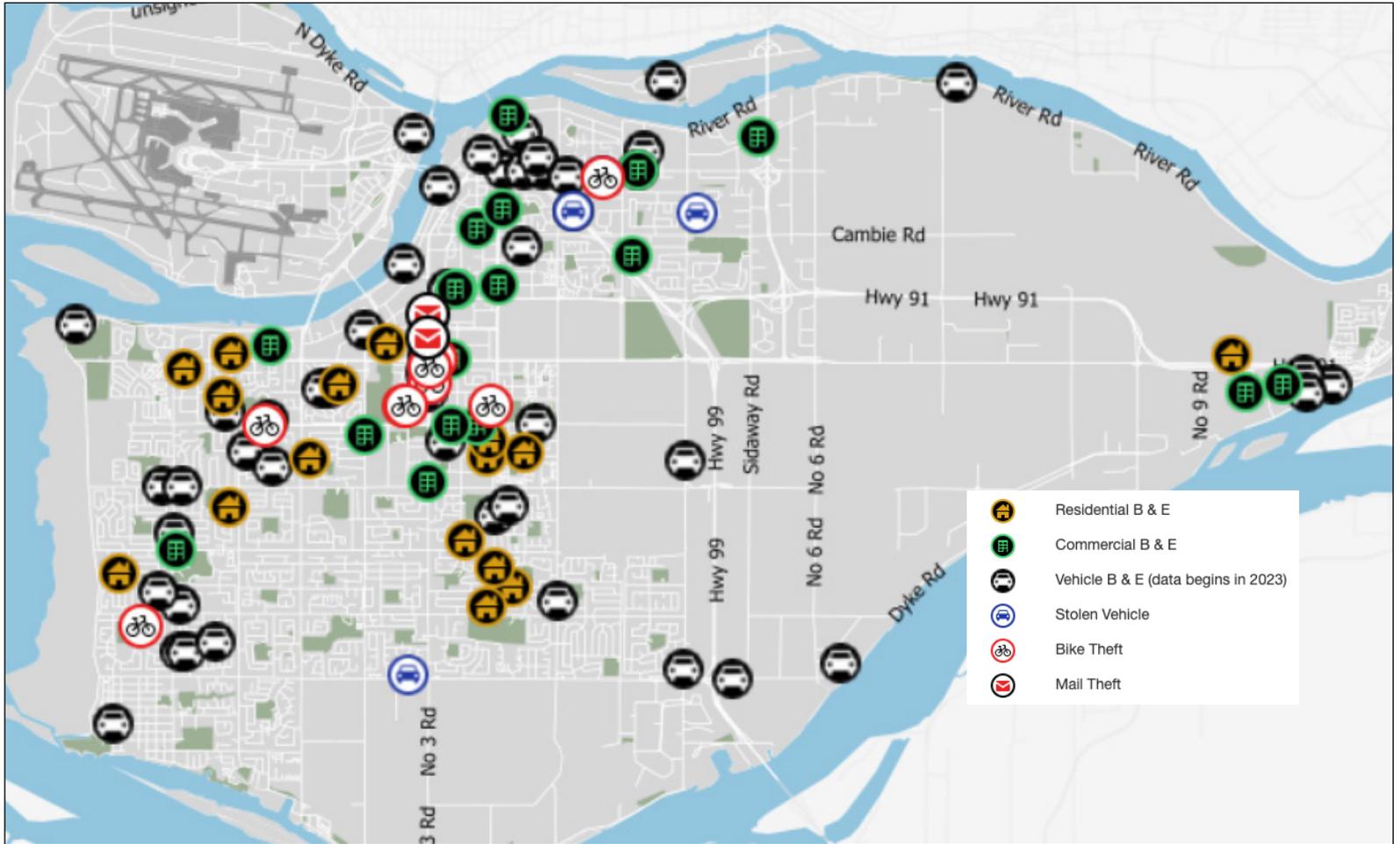


Photo courtesy csgeo.richmond.ca

## Royal Canadian Mounted Police—Serving with Excellence

### Richmond RCMP warns public of spike in distraction thefts targeting Seniors

February 17, 2026 - Richmond, British Columbia

Richmond RCMP is warning the public after a rise in distraction theft incidents reported between December 2025 and early February 2026, with thirteen incidents occurring in Richmond and a clear increase beginning in late January. These occurrences involve suspects approaching victims in public areas, most often roadside or in neighbourhood settings, while the victims are walking or otherwise alone.

Suspects may arrive on foot or in a vehicle and use a variety of distraction techniques, such as asking for directions, pretending to recognize the victim, offering jewelry as a gift, or sharing emotional stories about family illness or personal hardship. In several cases, suspects initiated physical contact, including placing jewelry on the victim, holding hands, or giving unexpected hugs. Victims later discovered that their own jewelry had been removed, swapped, or damaged during the interaction.

While some reported incidents did not result in a theft, the behaviours closely match known distraction theft patterns seen across the region. Seniors were the primary targets, with victims in Richmond ranging from 62 to 92 years old.

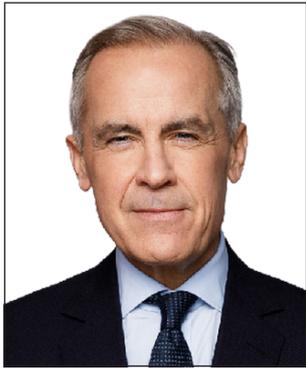
“These interactions can seem harmless at first, but they are designed to lower your guard,” says Cst. Frank Bryson of the Richmond RCMP. “We encourage the public to stay alert, trust their instincts, and take steps to protect themselves. If something feels unusual or uncomfortable, create distance and contact police.”

#### Safety tips:

- Be cautious if approached by strangers offering gifts, jewelry, or asking for personal assistance.
- Keep valuables such as necklaces and rings secured and avoid displaying them publicly when possible.
- Do not allow unfamiliar individuals to place jewelry or other items on you.
- If you feel unsafe or believe a crime is in progress, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Anyone with information about these incidents, or who may have experienced similar suspicious interactions, is asked to contact Richmond RCMP at 604-278-1212

# Prime Minister Carney announces new Chief Trade Negotiator to the United States



PM MARK CARNEY  
Photo pm.gc.ca

Prime Minister, Mark Carney, today announced that the Honourable Janice Charette has been appointed as the next Chief Trade Negotiator to the United States.

*“With four decades of experience in public policy and diplomacy, Janice Charette brings extraordinary leadership, expertise, and a deep commitment to advancing Canada’s interests. As Chief Trade Negotiator, she will advance Canadian interests and a strengthened trade and investment*



Janice Charette appears as a witness at the Foreign Interference Commission in Ottawa, on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024.

Photo - The Canadian Press/Spencer Colby

*relationship that benefits workers and industries in both Canada and the United States.”* – The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada

Ms. Charette brings four decades of experience across public policy and diplomacy. She has served at the highest levels of Canada’s public service, including twice as the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet. She has also represented Canada’s interests abroad, including as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Working closely with the Ambassador of Canada to the United States, Mark Wiseman, Ms. Charette will act as a senior advisor to the Prime Minister and the Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, Dominic LeBlanc, on the upcoming Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) trade review and strengthening the trade and investment relationship between Canada and the United States.

The Prime Minister extends his deep gratitude to Kirsten Hillman for her immense contributions as Canada’s Chief Trade Negotiator, in addition to her responsibilities as Canada’s Ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Hillman has resolutely defended Canadian values and interests and promoted a stronger future for Canadian workers.

# Prime Minister Carney launches Canada’s first Defence Industrial Strategy to strengthen security, create prosperity, and reinforce strategic autonomy

The world is changing rapidly. The international rules-based order is fading, and technological change is expanding the fields of conflict. In response, Canada’s new government is focused on what we can control: rebuilding, rearming, and reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). We are working fast and seeing results: Canada is on track to hit our 2% NATO spending target this fiscal year and applications to join the CAF are up nearly 13%.

To protect Canada’s sovereignty, build our prosperity, and strengthen our strategic autonomy, the Canadian government must change how we invest in defence. Canada’s defence procurement has long been too complicated, too slow, and too reliant on international suppliers, limiting the growth of our defence industries. This has left our workers and businesses with fewer opportunities, our domestic industries without the demand necessary to scale, and critically, the women and men of our military without the equipment they need to defend our sovereignty and that of our Allies.

Canada’s new government is changing this. Today, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, launched Canada’s first **Defence Industrial Strategy**. This is a strategy to transform our defence industries by prioritising Canadian suppliers and materials, investing in Canadian innovation and commercialisation, and streamlining procurement to give businesses consistent and predictable demand. This will enable Canada’s aerospace, cyber, and other industries to scale up operations to sell more at home and to trusted partners around the world, creating high-paying careers for Canadians across defence supply chains.

The **Defence Industrial Strategy** positions Canadian industry to take advantage of \$180 billion in defence procurement opportunities and \$290 billion in defence-related capital investment opportunities in Canada over the next 10 years, with an anticipated \$125 billion downstream economic benefit by 2035. The Defence Industrial Strategy will create 125,000 high-paying careers, increase our defence exports by 50%, raise the share of defence acquisitions awarded to Canadian firms to 70%, and grow Canadian defence industry revenues by 240%. Within a decade, we will raise maritime fleet serviceability to 75%, land fleets to 80%, and aerospace fleets to 85% to bolster Canadian defence. In total, the Defence Industrial Strategy is an investment of over half a trillion dollars in Canadian security, economic prosperity, and our sovereignty.

The **Defence Investment Agency (DIA)** is central to this strategy. It will streamline processes, cut red tape, and speed up delivery. It will equip the CAF with what it needs, when it needs it, and will prioritise manufacturing and strategic partnerships with Canadian firms, including small and medium-sized businesses. The DIA will also lead Canada’s participation in joint procurement initiatives.

Canada’s Defence Industrial Strategy **will strengthen security, create prosperity, and reinforce our strategic autonomy**. For more information available at PMO Media Relations: [media@pmo-cpm.gc.ca](mailto:media@pmo-cpm.gc.ca) or <https://pm.gc.ca>

# Budget secures B.C.'s future, protects critical services

## B.C. makes disciplined spending choices while growing the economy



**BRENDA BAILEY**  
Minister of Finance



In a world of ongoing and heightened economic uncertainty, Budget 2026 makes careful choices to protect what matters most to British Columbians through investments to protect services, such as health care, education and social supports, while securing B.C.'s future through skills training and targeted investments to spur economic growth.

**"Over the past eight years, we have built schools, hospitals and invested in the services British Columbians rely on every day,"** said Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance. **"Our investments have allowed us to enter these uncertain times from a position of strength, but we need to be realistic about the difficult financial situation we face as a province. We are choosing to safeguard what we've built, while growing our economy to secure good jobs and economic prosperity for people and families."**

Budget 2026 opens the door further for people to train for good-paying careers in the skilled trades through \$283 million in new funding over three years. This will expand spaces for in-demand trades training programs, increase per-seat funding to training centres, and enhance the B.C. Employer Training Grant to double apprenticeship seats by 2028-29.

A new \$400-million British Columbia strategic investment fund will help B.C. invest quickly in collaborative opportunities and major projects as the federal government invests in Canada's sovereignty. Budget 2026 supports businesses to leverage new opportunities through a new temporary Manufacturing and Processing Investment Tax Credit for investing in new buildings, machinery and equipment. To support B.C.'s maritime sector, which is the largest in Canada, Budget 2026 extends the Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Industry Tax Credit until the end of 2027.

### Safeguarding what matters most in turbulent times

Budget 2026 protects the most critical services that people rely on every day through \$5.1 billion in funding to strengthen health care, K-12 education and supports for people who need care and assistance. This includes funding to recruit and train more health-care professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and long-term care support workers in communities across B.C. Budget 2026 includes \$634 million in new funding for K-12 education over three years, including a \$167-million investment in the Classroom Enhancement Fund, which will result in more teachers for everyone, as well as special-education teachers and teacher psychologists and counsellors. New investments of \$131 million will support intensive, specialized mental-health and addictions treatment for people with concurrent challenges of complex mental illness, addictions and acquired brain injuries. It will also fund involuntary treatment beds in Prince George, Maple Ridge and Surrey.

A new \$330-million lift to ChildCareBC will protect the child care services families rely on by maintaining lower fees, and the spaces and support for operators and educators achieved over the past eight years. Budget 2026 also provides \$25 million in new funding to support the expansion of child care options on school grounds. With \$475 million in new

funding for children and youth with disabilities, families will get direct funding for support services and better access to more service providers in their communities.

Budget 2026 provides \$139 million in funding over three years to reduce repeat, violent offending and chronic property crime, and support timely access to justice.

### Making disciplined spending choices to reduce spending and increase revenue

Government has exceeded initial targets set in Budget 2025 for expenditure management through operational and program savings. Budget 2026 continues that work by introducing targets to reduce the size of the public sector, and generates new revenue over the three-year fiscal plan. **"We are making careful choices to secure B.C.'s future,"** Bailey said. **"We are updating the tax system to raise revenue and prevent cuts to critical services, while keeping B.C. one of the lowest-taxed provinces for working and middle-class families. At the same time, we are reducing government spending and carefully repacing our capital plan to deliver services and infrastructure more efficiently."**

To improve B.C.'s fiscal outlook and raise revenues to protect critical services, Budget 2026 increases the tax rate of the first income-tax bracket by less than 0.6 percentage points. The average increase will be \$76 in 2026, and more than 40% of taxpayers will see savings when combined with an increase to the B.C. Tax Reduction Credit. The credit offsets the tax change for British Columbians with lower incomes. British Columbians with middle incomes will continue to have some of the lowest taxes in the country, and government funding continues to help people with costs through measures such as the BC Family Benefit, more affordable child care and lower car insurance. Budget 2026 also increases the speculation tax for foreign owners and untaxed worldwide earners, as well as taxes on luxury homes worth more than \$3 million through changes to the Additional School Tax.

Deficits are projected to decline over the fiscal plan from \$13.3 billion in 2026-27 to \$11.4 billion in 2028-29 as government continues to achieve its targets through the efficiency review, hiring restrictions, and streamlining program and service delivery. B.C.'s deficit-to-GDP ratio is projected to decline from 2.9% in 2026-27 to 2.3% in 2028-29.

B.C.'s debt-to-GDP ratio is among the best in Canada and remains affordable relative to provincial peers, even as the Province works to bring it down.

### A sustainable capital plan

The Province is continuing to build infrastructure to create jobs and meet the needs of British Columbians. Over the next three years, government will make nearly \$38 billion worth of taxpayer-supported investment to continue construction on 17 major hospitals and acute care facilities, 66 K-12 school additions and improvements, and important transit and transportation expansions.

After years of building infrastructure to close gaps and strengthen services, B.C. is adjusting the pace of the capital plan to make sure it is sustainable over the long term.

Budget 2026 makes realistic choices to raise revenue and safeguard critical services amid a time of financial challenges and global uncertainty, while making the public sector more efficient to ensure more dollars reach the front lines.

### Learn More

2026 Budget and Fiscal Plan: <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/>

# After a decade of decline, NDP Budget does not deliver for seniors, working families and small businesses



**PETER MILOBAR**  
Official Opposition Critic  
for Finance



**V**ICTORIA, B.C.: Peter Milobar, B.C. Conservative Finance Critic, condemned the NDP government's latest budget as the result of a decade of decline that has left British Columbians broke, unsafe, and paying more for less.

**"After ten years of NDP mismanagement, this budget is an assault on seniors, working families, and the small businesses that drive our economy,"** said Milobar. **"The NDP have turned their back on the people working hardest to**

**make ends meet and the seniors who built this province."**

Milobar pointed to a new \$1.1 billion annual income tax increase and warned that the government is piling new costs onto households already struggling with affordability. **"This government keeps asking British Columbians for more, while delivering less,"** Milobar said. **"The question people are asking is simple: Where has all the money gone?"**

Milobar noted that B.C. has gone from a surplus in the first year of NDP government to a projected deficit of more than \$13 billion this year, while provincial debt is projected to reach a record \$182 billion this fiscal – more than triple what it was when the NDP took power.

## An assault on working families and seniors

The 2027 budget hammers working families with a \$1.1 billion annual tax increase by increasing provincial income taxes on the lowest bracket and freezing the indexation of tax brackets until 2030 – a hidden hike. This budget punishes seniors with the expansion of the PST to include items like landlines, cable television, and clothing repair materials; people saving money by repairing shoes or knitting yarn scarves will be subject a tax increase. For years, British Columbians have been begging the NDP to address the rising cost of living, but after a decade of reckless spending and mismanagement, this government is trying to paper over their mistakes by punishing working families.

Milobar challenged the government to answer the questions British Columbians care about most:

**"Does this budget make your life more affordable? Does it make your community safer? Does it make your schools and hospitals stronger?"** Milobar asked. **"Nearly every metric shows things in B.C. have gotten worse, not better, and instead of taking accountability, the NDP will blame everyone but themselves and shake them down to pay the bill."**

## Budget misses the mark on healthcare

This budget fails to address the many issues throughout B.C.'s health-care system with the urgency it requires. Under the NDP, access to care has deteriorated across the province, and nowhere is that clearer than in long-term care.

New data from B.C.'s Seniors Advocate shows that long-term care waitlists have more than tripled over the past decade and average wait times have nearly doubled to 290 days. British Columbians were told that record spending would strengthen healthcare. Instead, seniors are being left stuck waiting for care while families are pushed past their limit, and the system is failing from emergency rooms to maternity wards. Additionally, six previously announced long-term care facilities as and the Burnaby Hospital Redevelopment have had their intended completion dates changed

updated with TBC (to be cancelled? Page 64 Budget & Fiscal Plan).

## Budget hits small business while communities face disorder

Milobar said the budget is especially punishing for small businesses that are already struggling, including a \$500 million annual tax hike on professional services like accounting, bookkeeping, and private security, all of which will become subject to PST. **"Small business owners are dealing with crime and disorder in our downtowns, made worse by David Eby's reckless decriminalization experiment. They're paying out of pocket for increased security because law enforcement can't keep up with the chaos. Instead of addressing the root causes facing small businesses, the NDP is shoplifting an additional \$500 million a year from them."**

Milobar also criticized the budget for failing to address key economic sectors and public safety concerns. **"The number of key economic targets that are "to be determined" in Ministry services plans shows just how unserious this government really is about economic growth. There's nothing meaningful here for forestry. And the budget fails to address the crime and extortion that are hurting families and businesses across B.C.,"** he said.

Milobar said the B.C. Conservatives will continue pressing for a fiscal plan focused on affordability, safe communities, and fundamental support for the people and industries that power the province – not hidden tax hikes and novelty programs that pick winners and losers. For information Media Contact: [Francesca.Guetchev@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Francesca.Guetchev@leg.bc.ca)

*The Richmond Sentinel is providing the NDP BC Government's 2026 Budget on page 8 as received in their Press release on February 17, 2026, for full details go to <https://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/>. The Richmond Sentinel is also providing a Press release received February 17, 2026 from the BC Conservative Party (Official Opposition Party). By providing both Press releases it is not the intent to defame anyone or anything. The views, opinions, or content provided do not represent those of the Richmond Sentinel.*



Photo courtesy freepik.com

# Reinforcing B.C.'s leadership in interprovincial trade. Permanent interprovincial recognition law will reduce barriers, support businesses, lower costs



Photo - news.gov.bc.ca

- New Trade Recognition Act (Bill 5) will make B.C.'s interprovincial recognition framework permanent
- Bill 5 would ensure goods and services approved in other provinces can be sold or used in B.C., subject to identified exceptions, complementing current and future statutes in other provinces that recognize B.C. goods and services
- The legislation strengthens B.C.'s competitiveness by making it easier for businesses to expand across Canada and attract investment to the province



**HON. RAVI KAHLON**  
BC Minister of Jobs and  
Economic Growth

Government is introducing new legislation that, if passed, will make B.C.'s current, time-bound interprovincial recognition framework, the Economic Stabilization (Tariff Response) Act, Part 1, permanent.

**The proposed Bill 5:** Trade Recognition Act would further reinforce B.C.'s leadership in eliminating interprovincial trade barriers. This would ensure that goods and services lawfully sold, used or supplied in any other Canadian province can also be sold, used or supplied in B.C., unless an exception applies. This comprehensive coverage would complement legislation other provinces have passed to remove barriers for the sale of B.C. goods and services.

"This legislation would strengthen B.C.'s leadership in reducing barriers and creating opportunities for businesses of all sizes," said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth. "By moving to make mutual recognition permanent, we're helping businesses save time and money, while increasing choice and affordability for people throughout the province. It's a key part of our Look West strategy to diversify trade, be less reliant on the U.S. market and position B.C. to lead Canada's economic future."

## What the legislation does

The new bill would bring British Columbia's commitments under the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement (CMRA) into force under B.C. law, while offering broader coverage than the CMRA.

Under Bill 5, businesses would no longer need to redo testing, approvals or certification for goods and services that may be sold, used or provided in another province. This will lower compliance costs for businesses, improve time to market, lower prices and increase choice. The new bill would also give businesses and people assurances that if any B.C. regulatory measures create barriers to trade, those measures can be removed or overruled. Through regulations, it would provide a concise and complete list of the regulatory exceptions that B.C. will be retaining.

## Exceptions

The bill would preserve B.C.'s ability to protect, environmental, consumer, health, safety and other standards. It would not apply to certified occupations under the Labour Mobility Act, which already establishes mutual recognition. General exceptions would also apply to measures relating to Indigenous people, monopolies, taxation and incorporation requirements.

## Supporting a barrier free Canadian economy

B.C. brought together Canada's 10 provinces, three territories and the federal government in unprecedented collaboration to approve the Canadian Mutual Recognition Agreement (CMRA) on Nov.19, 2025, making it easier for businesses to sell Canadian-made goods across Canada.

B.C. has also signed economic co-operation arrangements with Ontario, Manitoba and the Yukon on labour mobility, sales of alcoholic beverages and the potential of connecting electrical grids with the Yukon.

The Province remains committed to working with partners to support the free movement of labour, alcohol, and financial and other services to make it easier to trade within Canada. This work aligns with the Province's Look West strategy, and its goals of diversifying trade, expanding market access, and ensuring B.C. remains a leader in Canada's economic future.

To learn more about Look West:

To learn more about free trade in Canada:

For more information about B.C. legislation, visit:

Jobs and Prosperity for a Stronger BC and Canada, visit: <https://gov.bc.ca/LookWest>

<https://www.gov.bc.ca/DomesticTrade>

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/legislation>



**Joe Biz** — by *Joe Leary*

## Broadcast Legend Jim Robson Passes at 91

Every sport has their top-tier level of performer; affectionately hailed by the acronym, 'The Goat' – "The Greatest of All-Time".

Within the pantheon of NHL play-by-play broadcasters throughout Canada's history, no one disputes that title is rightfully owned by Jim Robson.

More than just a soundtrack to the game of hockey - Robson's voice was woven into our country's cultural mosaic among generations of fans. The legendary broadcaster passed away on **February 9, 2026, at the age of 91** and the hockey world mourns not only the loss of a gifted storyteller but a true icon.

Born in **1935, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**, Jim Robson's broadcast journey into sports began at 17 years of age when he walked into a radio station in Port Alberni, BC and began what would become a remarkable career for decades.

He quickly emerged as a 'natural' behind the microphone.

In the mid-1950s, Robson made his way to Vancouver, where he worked for radio stations CKWX and CKNW covering a variety of sports including BC Lions football, Vancouver Mounties baseball, lacrosse, and hockey. His sports versatility was clear, but it was his love of the latter that became his enduring passion. The voice of Jim Robson would define hockey for so many.

When the **Vancouver Canucks** entered the National Hockey League as an expansion franchise in **1970**, Robson became their voice; a

role he cherished and held with unmatched distinction for **29 years**. From Vancouver's very first NHL game on **October 9, 1970**, until his retirement in **1999**, Robson called more than **2,000 NHL games**. And he wasn't just another play-by-play announcer. Jim Robson had the rare ability to paint pictures with words, bringing the action alive for listeners who weren't in the arena.

He endearingly became known for his genuine inclusivity, regularly addressing "the hospital patients and shut-ins... those of you who can't make it out to the game," making every listener feel part of the action. For nearly three decades he guided fans through the thrills and heartbreaks of Vancouver Canucks hockey - from the excitement of expansion to the hope and eventual heartbreak of post-season runs. Stanley Cup playoff games in **1982** and the unforgettable run to the **1994 Stanley Cup Final** are forever linked with Robson's voice.

His call of key moments like Greg Adams' overtime winner or his rallying words about captain Trevor Linden ("He will play") remain etched

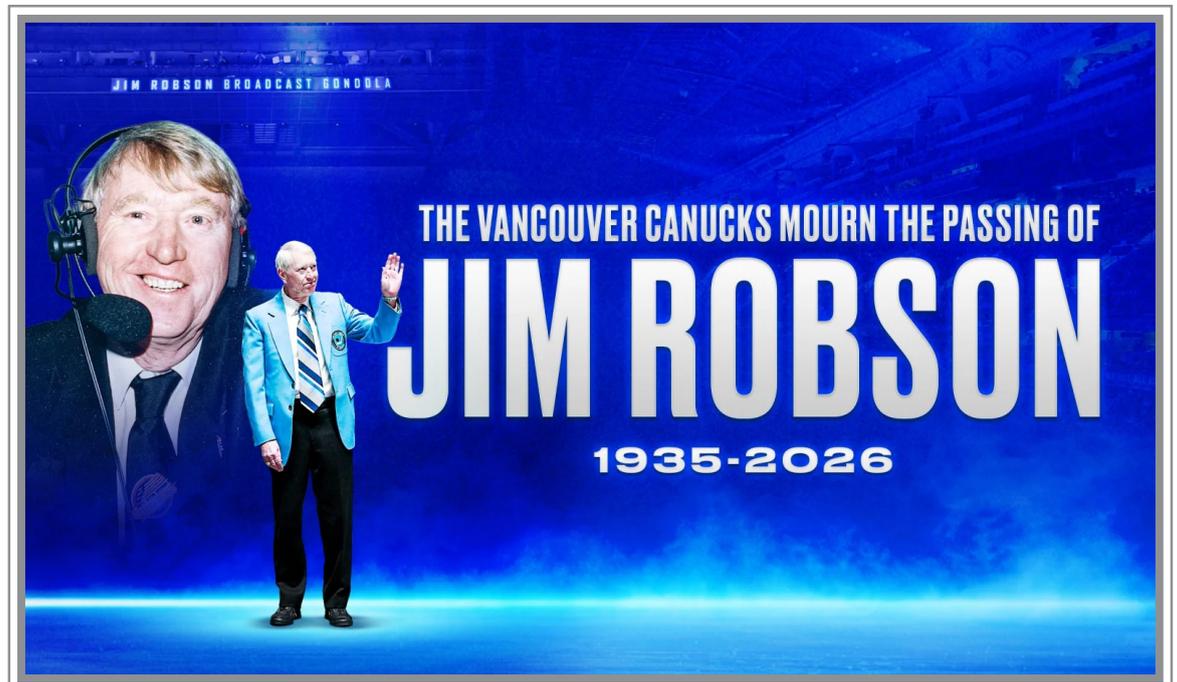
He was never about promoting himself - it was always about the game, the players, and the fans. That dedication was evident in the fact he **never missed a broadcast due to illness** throughout his long career. Even after his retirement in 1999, Robson's connection to hockey and the Canucks remained strong. He regularly attended games where he would graciously greet fans and share stories with anyone who cherished the sport as much as he did.

The broadcast booth at Vancouver's Rogers Arena bears his name, a lasting and enduring tribute to his immeasurable contributions.

On and off the air, Robson was admired for his character. Colleagues, players and fans alike spoke of his kindness, generosity and

professionalism and tributes poured in from all corners of the sports community after news of his passing. For an entire province and NHL franchise still chasing that elusive first Stanley Cup, Robson's voice provided both solace and inspiration.

Fans joked that he was waiting to "pop the



Vancouver Canucks mourn the passing of Jim Robson

Photo - Canucks Communications / Vancouver Canucks

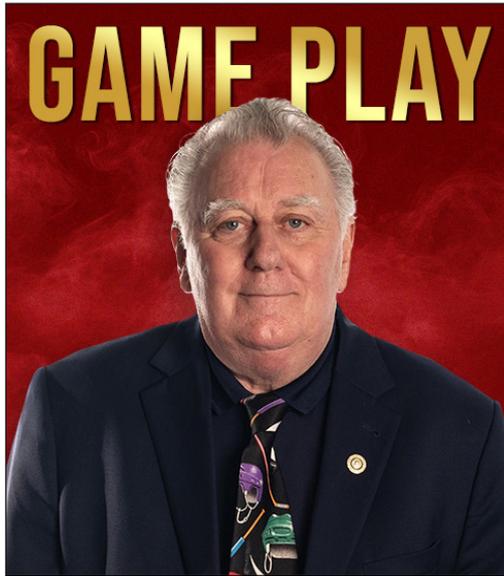
in the hearts and memories of fans. Robson was respected and admired nationally appearing on **Hockey Night in Canada** where he called four Stanley Cup Finals and five NHL All-Star Games.

His work earned him numerous honors and acclaim. In **1992** Jim Robson was bestowed the **Foster Hewitt Memorial Award**, a prestigious recognition from the Hockey Hall of Fame. He was later inducted into the **BC Hockey Hall of Fame** in **1998**; the **BC Sports Hall of Fame** in **2000**, followed by the **Canadian Association of Broadcasters Broadcast Hall of Fame** two years later. Robson's approach to broadcasting was marked by knowledge and a genuine love for the sport and those who followed it. And he plied his trade with humility.

champagne" when the Canucks finally won it all. It's a gesture that speaks to both his lifelong dedication and the bittersweet reality that he never realized that moment. Yet his legacy, bound up in every puck drop, goal and thrilling playoff push, endures. The legendary broadcaster left behind not just a storied career but the memories of generations of fans who felt as though he was right there with them in every exciting play and tense moment, in victory or defeat.

His voice may now be silent, but the echoes of his words and the joy they brought all of us who were there to experience it all will live on in our hearts forever.

Thank you, Jim Robson,



## Steve Erickson

Media Relations Richmond Sockeyes

# Happy Family Day From the Sockeyes

The Sockeyes enter the second week in February after an impressive 6-3 win over the Trappers returning home to face the Jets who are struggling to climb up in the standings heading into the first round of the playoffs. The Sockeyes have officially clinched first place in league play with one home game remaining against the visiting Trail Blazers who have struggled to advance in the standings as they currently sit in seventh in the eight team conference.

In conversation with a couple of players they knew that playing the Jets would be a "heated" contest only due to the aggressive play but regardless of what they might face on the ice the coaching staff had them well prepared as to what to expect. It was Sockeye's Dylan Nazareth starting things off, getting his 37th of the season at 9:25 with helpers to Kai Adano and David Yoon while the Jets were serving their third penalty of the game. Brody Lindal continued the scoring with his 25th of the season at 13:27 with Dylan Nazareth and David Yoon continuing to add points to their productive season in a period that saw the Jets hold a 17-16 lead in shots with the teams each trading four penalties. The second period saw the scoring continue with Quinn Orr (9th) with Brody Lindal and David Yoon setting him up from the back-end followed by the Jets first of the game at 5:53 as Ryan McAuley got them on the board. The aggressive play continued with both teams at times being "bated" into penalties that allowed Dylan Nazareth (38th) at 12:26 after taking a stretch pass from Solstice Tennant and Captain Teo Lin taking a 4-1 lead. The third period saw Sockeyes' Gavin Dacpano (2nd) open the third at



Richmond Sockeye Fans

Photo courtesy Richmond Sockeyes

1:10 with Quinn Orr and David Yoon adding to his point total followed by Jonathan Zhang (6th) with Kai Adano and Keelan Wyke. Given the frustration from the Jets they managed to get their second of the game with Thomas Harding (5th) at 9:55 followed by the final goal of the game by Dylan Nazareth for his "hat-trick" goal giving Richmond a 7-2 win.

The Jets finished with 13 penalties for 53 minutes while the Sockeyes were assessed 11 penalties for 33 minutes as the Sockeyes outshoot the Jets 47-35 through sixty minutes. Richmond easily took all three stars with Dylan Nazareth (3G/1A) named first star, David Yoon (4A) second star and Brody Lindal (1G/2A) third star. The players were given a "rare" day off to enjoy the Super Bowl which was more of a "team bonding" experience with several players cheering the Seahawks who pulled out a 29-13 win over New England.

Next up would be a match-up against the Trappers who opened the scoring at 3:23 that was a motivation for the Sockeyes player who quickly got on the score board at 7:54 with Dylan Nazareth getting his 40th of the season. While the game remained a close contest

Brody Lindal gave them a 2-1 lead at 19:01 with the period coming to a close with only one minor penalty assessed as the home squad doubled up on the Trappers by 14-7 in shots on net. The second period saw the Sockeyes open the scoring 17 seconds with Dylan Nazareth (41) with Quinn Orr and California's Jayden Shirk getting his first assist of the season setting up a 3-1 lead for the home squad.

The game at times was close checking only to have Langley's Bryson Patkau pulling them within one goal on a power play that saw Langley narrowly outshot 11-10 in the middle of the period and being outshot 25-17 after two periods.

The third period belonged to the Sockeyes, dominating not only in the shots, outshooting the Trappers by 15-5 but also scoring five unanswered goals finishing with an 8-2 win in a penalty filled period. While the fans were being entertained on the

ice by the talented play of the Sockeyes they were also entertained by the Lion Dance performers after the second period that had everyone mesmerized with the performance of the dancers. While the dancers entertained the crowd it was the play of the three stars that impressed everyone with Dylan Nazareth (2G/1A) named first star, Teo Lin (1G/3A) second star and Calgary's Keelan Wyke (1A) named third star.

The following night the Sockeyes paid a visit to the Trail Blazers pulling out a 7-3 win in a contest that they dominated, outshooting the home squad by a 51-38 margin setting up a return match for their last home game of the regular season. The Sockeyes have one final home game against the Trail Blazers February 19th followed by their last regular season game in Chilliwack at the Sardis Sports Complex February 22nd against the Jets.

While the season draws to a close, we have to thank the Parents who regularly stop by the broadcast area to thank both myself and Steve Daniel for calling the home games. In addition, they thank both Isaiah Hill for doing a remarkable job on the camera as well as Producer Dylan Dufresne who inputs all the graphics that make the production a first class professional broadcast. It's words that we hear from both the Parents and Players alike that make the production of the Richmond Sockeyes first class from the opening face-off to the final whistle. All league playoffs are a best of seven series that sets up one vs eight, two vs seven, three vs six and the fourth place team playing the fifth place team. With the season slowly coming to an end the Sockeyes have their sights set on continuing their winning ways with a focus on winning the league championship. League play-offs have yet to be set but we can mention that the Richmond Sockeyes have home ice given their impressive record.

Albeit a "tad" late the Sockeyes hope everyone had a Happy Family Day enjoying quality time with Family and Friends alike.



**Douglas James Scammell**

## FASHION FOR MEN The Fedora

When it comes to a gentleman's hat fashion particularly during the winter months a rainproof felt fedora hat is a great stylish option that has stood the test of time. Although Fedora hats are nowhere near as popular as they were from the 1920's thru to the late 1960's they are still a great stylish accessory when pulled off with the right outfit.



### HISTORY

The men's fedora hat originated in the 1880s and gained immense popularity in the early 20th century as a practical, stylish, and expressive headwear for men, becoming an icon of confidence and sophistication during the jazz age and Prohibition eras. Named after the title character in Victorian Sardou's 1882 play "Fedora," the hat was initially a women's style before a visiting Prince Edward donned one in the 1920s, sparking widespread adoption by men. The fedora evolved from a weather-protective accessory into a symbol of urban sophistication and was frequently worn by Hollywood stars. Actors like

Humphrey Bogart, and Jimmy Stewart just to name a few were often seen wearing these hats in the movies they made as well as in their daily lives. Its popularity waned in the mid-20th century mid 1960's with the rise of informal styles and increased focus on men's hairstyles. However the hat did remain iconic and eventually made a comeback to a degree so far in the 21st century but nowhere near where it was at the peak in the 1940' and 50's.



So what exactly defines a fedora hat? Well a fedora is a hat with a soft brim and indented crown. It is typically creased lengthwise down the crown and "pinched" near the front on both sides. Fedoras can also be creased with teardrop crowns, diamond crowns, center dents, and others, and the positioning of pinches can vary. The typical crown height is 4.5 inches (11 cm). The fedora hat's brim is usually around 2.5 inches (6.4 cm) wide, but can be wider, can be left raw-edged (left as cut), finished with a sewn over welt or under welt, or bound with a trim-ribbon. Stitched edge means that there are one or more rows of stitching radiating inward toward the crown.

The Cavanagh edge is a welted edge with invisible stitching to hold it in place and is a very expensive treatment that requires a highly-skilled craftsman. Here is a better breakdown of some of the many different types of Fedora hats:

**Classic Fedora:** A balanced style with a medium brim and a balanced crown height, representing the quintessential fedora.

**Short-Brim Fedora:** Has a more compact, often narrower brim and a shorter crown, typically worn slightly back on the head.

**Wide-Brim Fedora:** Features a broader brim for increased sun protection, giving a bolder aesthetic.

**Safari Fedora:** Usually made from lighter felt or straw, with a wide brim for maximum sun coverage, suitable for outdoor wear.

**Packable Fedora:** Crafted from flexible, soft felt, designed to be rolled or folded for easy travel without losing its shape.

Other hats that are not Fedoras and often get mistaken for being a fedora when they are not, are listed below:

**Trilby:** Often mistaken for a fedora, the trilby is distinguished by its shorter, narrower, and often angled-down brim.

**Panama Hat:** A type of straw hat with similar characteristics to a fedora, often featuring a flexible brim and straw construction.

**Pork Pie Hat:** A distinct hat style with a flat, round crown and a short brim, sometimes seen as a variation of a fedora.

**Homburg Hat:** A more formal, less flexible hat than a fedora, featuring a fixed brim and a single lengthwise crease down the center of the crown.

### RESURGENCE

There is a resurgence of the men's fedora hat in the 21st century, moving it from its formal origins toward more casual and creative styling. Driven in part by fashion-conscious celebrities and Gen Z influencers, the fedora is being reimagined as a versatile, self-assured fashion statement rather than a relic of a past era.

The Gen Z has been pivotal in reviving the fedora, embracing it with a sense of nostalgia and irony. This new wave of wearers is mixing the vintage accessory with contemporary streetwear look like baggy jeans, loose shirts, and sneakers. That is not the look I would personally try to go for only because that is not my style. My style preference is I try to stay more timeless. But it is important to point out one of the many reasons for the hats resurgence.



Also the modern celebrities have helped make the fedora hat popular again like Johnny Depp, Bruno Mars, and Harry Styles by incorporating it into their distinct personal styles, both on and off the red carpet. Fictional characters, such as Indiana Jones and Freddy Krueger, also played a role in keeping the fedora in the public consciousness. I believe the biggest thing that has help to keep the fedora hat alive today in the 21st century is that it is a great looking hat, it is very versatile and looks stylish, no matter the outfit. But the hat looks incredible with an overcoat jacket or even a full suit when it is properly paired together with correct colors and fabrics. My suggestion if you are thinking about getting a fedora hat avoid cheap flimsy knockoff hats. Get a well-structured fedora hat made from quality material that will help you get the results you are looking for as well, the hat will last much longer giving you much more value in your purchase. There are a few great hat shops in the greater Vancouver area that offer some great fedora hats. I highly recommend visiting one of them to try them on and find a style that suits you best.

Photos courtesy DJ Scammell

# OUR CITY *tonight*

SPOTLIGHT ON

A TV SHOW

A FILM

A WINTER COCKTAIL



Photo courtesy Britbox

## THE VIEW – GRACE: SEASON 5

We have talked about this superb police-crime drama before in this column and on *Our City Tonight* TV. Now comes the much anticipated Season 5 of *Grace*, starring John Simm in the title role of Superintendent Roy Grace, a brilliant (and at times, unorthodox) detective based in Brighton, England. During the first 4 seasons, Roy Grace, though focused on each case, continued to be haunted by the disappearance of his wife, Sandy, some years previously. The resolution of that, and a growing, new love, Cleo, played by Zoe Tapper, were big parts of the storylines in Season 4. When this new season begins, a lot has changed: tragedy and a new character have entered the personal side of Grace's life. On the professional side, the cases he must solve with his team in each episode will draw you in – and judging by the big ratings in the UK, *Grace* shows no signing of slowing down. The show is based on the bestselling novels by Peter James (his credits are a mile long), with the

series adapted by screenwriter Russell Lewis (his credits are equally long). Like a lot of UK based police-crime dramas, *Grace* really excels, in part, by being around 90 minutes length, allowing the story more time to develop, with layers and more depth. You can view *Grace* now on *BritBox*. For more information go to [www.britbox.com](http://www.britbox.com)

## THE SIP – JACK FROST MARGARITA

As the winter months drag on, we continue to offer great cocktail suggestions from our many cocktail experts. This time, we turn to Ciaran McGuigan, bartender at Glowbal Restaurant, who offers up a winter sip that *Margarita* lovers will certainly want to sample. It's called the *Jack Frost Margarita*. "This is my favourite cocktail around wintertime," McGuigan tells us, "as I'm kind of a Margarita guy at heart, and it's good to be able to have a Margarita option all year round without feeling guilty about slinging back *Margaritas* in the wintertime." One sip for us though, and it does remind us of the warmer days of summer. You can certainly enjoy this special cocktail at Glowbal Restaurant, but, as always, we ask, is it easy to make at home? "The ingredients are very simple. If you can make a *Margarita* at home, you can definitely make the *Jack Frost*," McGuigan smiles as he mixes us another, "the only substitutions that you're doing, aside from a regular *Margarita*, is instead of *Triple Sec*, you're going to use *Blue Curacao*, which also gives it that nice rich look." He goes on to tell us that instead of simple syrup or sugar, you're going to use coconut cream, but depending on the coconut cream that you use, you might want to add a little bit of sugar. The verdict: a bit of summer in a superb, delicious winter cocktail. [www.glowbalgroup.com](http://www.glowbalgroup.com)



Photo courtesy Our City Tonight

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VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL

Photo courtesy VIWF

## THE EVENT – THE 2026 VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL

It has been part of *Our City Tonight* TV's yearly content since 2015: The Vancouver International Wine Festival, one of the oldest and biggest wine events in the world. This year, their 47<sup>th</sup>, the festival spotlight will be on the wines of France. "There will be 27 wineries from France, all the classic regions will be well represented," Executive Director Harry Herstcheg tells us, "along local wines from across BC, and other international wines from a dozen more countries." The festival officially kicks off with the Bacchanalia Gala Dinner+Wines on Saturday, March 7 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. It's followed by a week of parties, seminars, lunches, dinners, and tastings, including the Passport to Global Wines seminar on Friday, March 13, the Taste of France at LaSalle College Vancouver on Saturday, March 14, with a selection of French wines with bistro fare prepared by the next generation of chefs and restaurateurs, as well as the Grand Tasting Room which features tasting stations and wine bars, wine-friendly food and wine-related exhibitors and partners. And a bonus: book a downtown hotel through [StayVancouverHotels.com](http://StayVancouverHotels.com) and receive a free International Festival Tasting ticket. More information at [www.vanwinefest.ca](http://www.vanwinefest.ca)

# Singer Micah Barnes: From The Nylons to Vegas Breeze

**O**ur City Tonight sat down with Micah Barnes, renowned Canadian jazz artist, for a chat about his interesting vocal career.

**OCT:** *The general public would have first, had the pleasure of becoming familiar with your music back when you were a member of The Nylons. This cappella group became a global sensation selling over 3 million albums. From a very young age you were singing in jazz clubs, how did you make that transition to becoming part of this group?*

**MB:** It was crazy because I was performing on my own in Toronto yet I truly loved vocal harmony. I grew up loving vocal groups like *Manhattan Transfer*, *The Pointer Sisters* as well as many other singing groups. I never thought that would be my destiny until one day *The Nylons'* management knocked on my door - they needed a baritone. So they auditioned me and put me in a Boot Camp. It was very hard, I had to learn how to sing the harmonies but also learn to dance the choreography, be myself, tell jokes, and be a personality. It was a tall order for a young buck. I had trained as an actor, and some of the guys in the group came from a musical theatre background. There was a kind of understanding that we wanted to put on the best show we possibly could. We knew that it was music that they were coming to hear but the audience was also going to get an exciting theatrical concert experience. That was built into the way *The Nylons* performed, and I think that's why they became so successful so quickly. The audience went to a show that was hugely entertaining plus the music was so satisfying. I really learned a lot from the guys about how to make a concert a positive experience and to create something that people will carry in their heart for the rest of their lives. I'm so grateful that I had that opportunity to be a part of *The Nylons*.

**OCT:** *You then left the Nylons to have a very successful solo career. We were reading what The Globe and Mail had written about you saying that your lyrics are "often dryly comic with quick intelligence and a mischievous sense of humour together with bubbling show savvy. Let's talk a little bit about your solo career and*



Photo courtesy Micah Barnes  
Micah Barnes on location

*how that resulted in having a number one recording on the Billboard Charts.*

**MB:** I had been toiling away in the Los Angeles music scene with my own group and my own indie records. We had done very well nationally and I had been touring, but we hadn't achieved a great video yet. It was then that a remix artist, one of which is Canadian Barry Harris, was introduced to my music through my management and apparently, they went ballistic. They called me in for a meeting and they said "we want to work with you, but we can't yet. Madonna just called us for her remix."

These artists were very popular; they were called *Thunder Puss*. They rode the crest of house music divas through the 90s and into the early 2000s to the point where they were working with Christina Aguilera and Whitney Houston. I patiently waited my turn and then one day they said they were ready and they had the right song for me. We took that song to number one because it hit that sort of late-night kind of vibe. It had a sexy darkness to it plus I gave it a rock 'n' roll vocal. At the time there were not a lot of men singing club music, so this song became a

global sensation. That is how it hit number one on the *Billboard Charts* and I'm certainly happy to have that on my résumé. I'm not a dance artist so I decided not to follow up with a series of club tracks. I did feel like that would be a trap for me. I grew up with jazz and for me it had been a beautiful left turn and I was thrilled to be part of that project. But I was also happy when it was time to come back to my home-roots music.

**OCT:** *Let's talk about your latest album release, which is Vegas Breeze. The songs End of Love Affair and When in Rome are amazing. We encourage everyone to check out your website because not only is the music incredible, but the videos are also well done. Tell us a little bit about that experience.*

**MB:** Well, as a gay man I never really felt like the Vegas showroom vibe was what I fit into. I didn't relate to Frank Sinatra or Dean Martin. Instead, I was attracted to great singers and terrific entertainers like Sammy Davis Jr. If I was going to imagine Micah Barnes performing in a classic Vegas showroom, I leaned more towards entertainers that maybe weren't as famous. These artists still worked Vegas a lot, people like Peggy Lee, Sarah Vaughan, and certainly Nat King Cole and Lena Horne. I felt a little bit more of a kinship to their stories and the songs. My song, *When in Rome*, is basically just about a playboy out there giving fancy excuses for the fact that he's footloose and fancy free. And at the same time saying, please don't blame me if I do what the Romans do when in Rome. It's all tongue in cheek and that lovely review that you mentioned from *The Globe and Mail* reflects that I'm attracted to witty and sophisticated material. I think that's where the Vegas showroom aesthetic worked for me. Now these days we're working towards a brand-new album with *Alma Records*, which will be released through *Universal*. This album will be all in the 60s R&B vibe. I can't wait for the audience to hear what we have in store for them.

**OCT:** *We can't wait to hear what you have in store and of course, the next time you're in Vancouver, we would love to sit down with you again. We wanted to mention also that you are a Vocal Coach and for more information, you can check out [micahbarnes.com](http://micahbarnes.com)*



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