

# THE CAMPUS RESIDENT

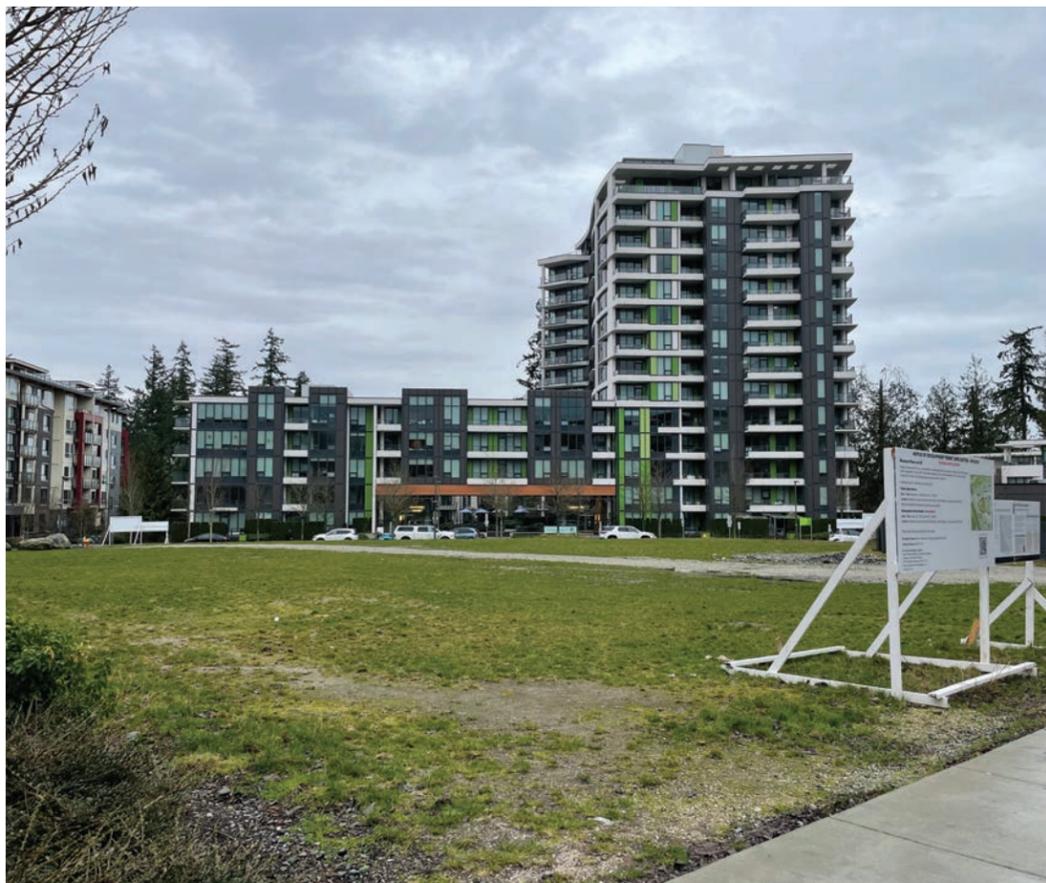
MARCH 7, 2024  
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## Welcoming the Year of the Dragon

Community-led Lunar New Year celebrations at Wesbrook Community Centre draw 1,600. **Page 10**

## Shadows and Highrises: Battle Continues over Wesbrook Landscape



Lot 26, located at the corner of Gray Avenue and Ross Drive. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

*Development permit expected in the coming weeks for highrise—townhouse project.*

BY ADA BUCUR

A controversial development proposal in Wesbrook Place has been given the green light from campus planners.

UBC's development permit board considered a development permit application by Polygon Homes for Lot 26, located at the corner of Gray Avenue and Ross Drive, at a meeting in late January this year.

While no development permit has been issued so far, the highrise and townhouse development is expected to get the go-ahead despite considerable opposition from local residents. A development permit from UBC's director of planning is expected within the next few weeks following a final plan submission from the applicants, an official from UBC Campus and Community Planning said, paving the way for construction to begin.

The construction of the proposed residential complex—a 16-storey tower and eight townhouses—has been a contentious topic since Vancouver-based developer Polygon Homes first unveiled the plans for the vaguely triangular space that backs onto the Webber Lane greenway and waterway in May 2023.

The original plans generated sufficient opposition that the development permit process was postponed for Polygon to make changes. Critics complained about shadows that would be cast by the proposed tower on the six-storey

Prodigy condominiums across Gray Avenue. The development's density and footprint and the reduction in green space were also concerns, as well as noise and traffic issues because two major construction projects would be underway at the same time in the same area.

A block away, on Ross Drive and Birney Avenue on so-called Lot 6, Polygon is currently finishing excavations for another 16-storey market apartment building with three-storey townhouses.

When Polygon came back in November with revised plans, the proposed 16-storey tower was rotated to occupy the centre of the site, instead of facing Gray Avenue. The new proposal also cut the number of townhouses to eight from 11 while adding seven units in the tower, bringing the number to 214.

It also consolidated open space toward the western side of the site, but the area converging at Ross Drive and Gray Avenue would become a private landscaped outdoor space for the use of future residents of the development.

Nine trees on the site and six trees along the street would need to be removed but 77 trees on the boulevards would be protected. Vehicle access to a three-level underground garage will be provided from Ross Drive.

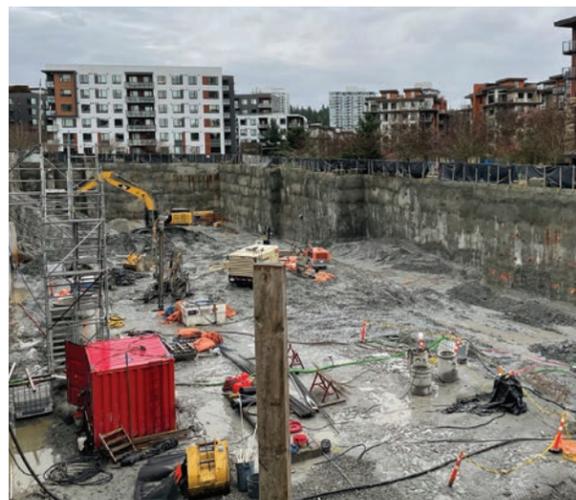
The changes were sufficient to win approval by the UBC planners. In December 2023, the project received final consideration from an advisory urban design panel and was presented to the development review committee, which supported the project.

But at a second public open house in December, it became clear that Polygon and UBC had done little to quell opposition.

The density of the project, the shadows cast by the tower and the desire for public open space are problems not addressed by the minor changes.

Concerns were also voiced over pedestrian safety because of increased traffic, the impact of two ongoing construction sites in close proximity, and the additional traffic congestion on Ross Drive once the Lot 26 and Lot 6 projects are completed.

ADA BUCUR IS A CAMPUS RESIDENT, POSSESSES A GRAPHIC DESIGN DIPLOMA, A PHOTOGRAPHY CERTIFICATE, AND OVER TWO DECADES OF JOURNALISM EXPERTISE GAINED IN HER NATIVE ROMANIA.



Lot 6 on Ross Drive and Birney Avenue, where Polygon Homes is finishing excavations to build a 16-storey apartment building with three-storey townhouses. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

## UNA Budget Passes Vote

Board members vote to submit the \$8.1 million 2024–2025 budget to UBC for implementation. **Page 2**



## Embracing the Shared Economy

Local initiatives using the concept of a sharing economy are creating a sustainable and connected community. **Page 6**



## Repairs to accommodate breeding frogs

Ongoing repair work on Webber Lane waterway won't interfere with upcoming Pacific tree frog breeding season, UBC says. **Page 9**



## Gardening Can Yield Bountiful Rewards

The Campus Resident offers some tips for gardening success this spring. **Page 9**



# UNA Budget Passes Vote After Vigorous Debate

*Budget outlining \$8.1 million in spending submitted to UBC for final approval.*

BY EMMANUEL SAMOGLU

UNA board members have voted to submit the 2024–2025 budget to UBC for implementation.

The budget provides details on more than \$8 million in spending for the 2024–2025 fiscal year, which runs from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

It allocates funds for core services such as waste collection, landscaping, parking enforcement, equipment upgrades, and community programs such as camps.

During debate on the budget at the most recent board meeting Feb. 20—where a vote on the budget was on the agenda—UNA director Fei Liu asked whether the vote could be delayed to address some concerns from residents. According to Liu, residents had approached her, asking for detailed information about UNA staff salaries and other administrative expenses.

In addition, Liu had asked to see a copy of an as-of-yet unpublished op-ed submitted to The Campus Resident by director Bill Holmes, which was

written in response to a petition created by Chancellor Place resident Brad Chen, who had also voiced strong concerns over the budget and the UNA budgetary process.

Holmes, in response, said Chen's concerns had already been addressed and a vote on the budget was required without delay due to the beginning of the fiscal year on April 1.

Ultimately the board went ahead with the vote, with directors Holmes, Murray McCutcheon, and Eagle Glassheim voting for the budget, while Liu voting against.

The budget will now be submitted to UBC, and the university will assess whether expenditures are in line with stipulations of the Neighbours Fund. Under the Neighbour's Agreement, UBC is entitled to receive the budget 45 days before the end of the fiscal year.

The budget has two parts: an operating budget that covers the UNA's operations, and a capital budget.

The capital budget is used for upgrades to the Wesbrook Community

Municipal Services Levy, which is paid by UBC Properties Trust on its buildings in the university neighbourhoods. The Neighbours Fund is designed to cover the municipal-like services outlined in the UNA budget.

The UNA will receive \$5.6 million from the Neighbours Fund for the 2024–2025 budget, after UBC makes withdrawals for expenses such as storm sewers, fire services, and access to UBC recreation facilities for UNA residents.

expenses, the budget seeks to align with some of the UNA's strategic priorities ([myuna.ca/strategic-plan/](http://myuna.ca/strategic-plan/)). As a result, the organization has set aside \$7,500 for a volunteer recognition dinner, \$90,000 for a tree management plan, and \$12,000 to paint the interior of the Old Barn Community Centre. It also expands the RRSP program for UNA staff at a cost of \$55,000.

The 2024–2025 budget is balanced—meaning no surplus or deficit is expected after all estimated revenues and expenses are accounted for.

UNA Finance Manager Athena Koon told The Campus Resident, "As the community keeps growing, we are projecting the UNA to continue to be in stable fiscal health."

Koon says the UNA's public consultation efforts for the 2024–2025 budget were met with a generally muted public response, with only one instance of feedback.

The strongest public criticism on the budget came from Chen, the author of the petition.

After meeting with UNA directors previously to voice his concerns, Chen circulated his petition titled, "Demand Better Financial Management and Community Focus in UNA's 2024–25 Budget." As of late February,

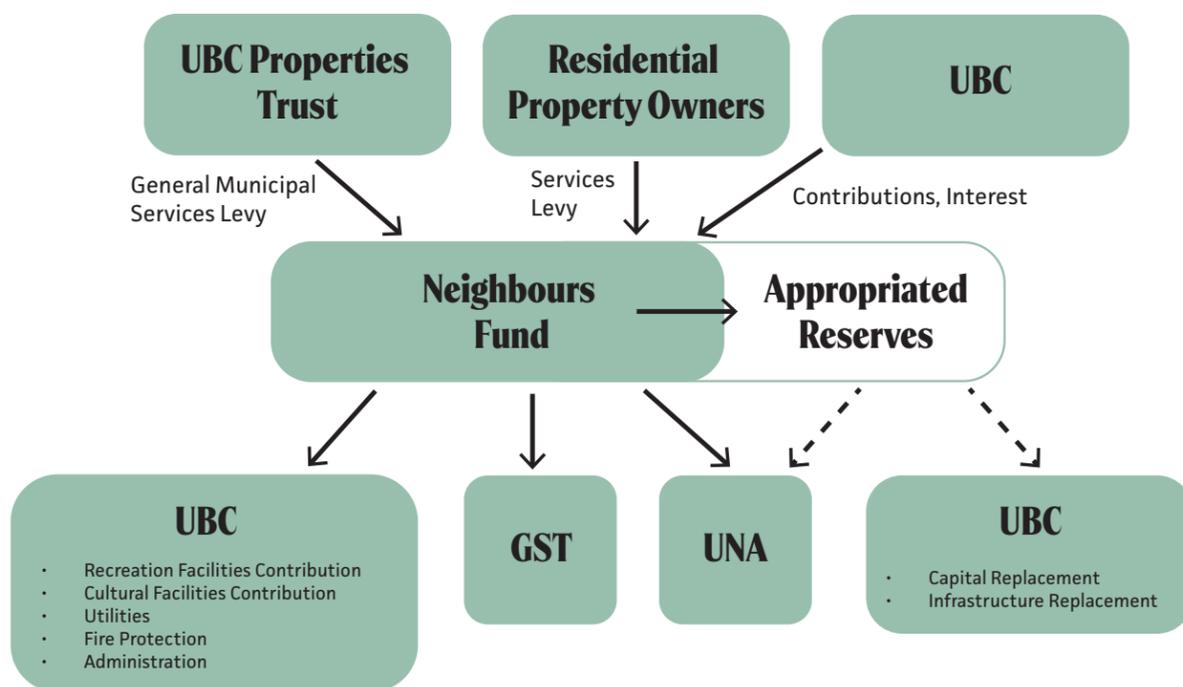
the petition had 391 signatures.

As mentioned during the board's budget debate, Chen also authored an op-ed that appeared in the February edition of The Campus Resident and has been republished in this issue on page 5.

Director Holmes' op-ed addressing Chen's budget critique can be found on page 4.

EMMANUEL SAMOGLU IS THE MANAGING EDITOR OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT.

## THE FLOW OF MONEY



Centre and covers the costs of parks, as well as other expenses on assets such as fitness and computer equipment, furniture and fixtures.

Most of the money in the budget comes from the Neighbours Fund. The entire budget is topped up from reserve funds and any surpluses from previous years.

UBC holds the Neighbours Fund account, which is funded by a levy paid by residential property owners in the university neighbourhoods and the General

Added to this figure is an estimated \$1.4 million in revenues from the Wesbrook and Old Barn Community Centre culture and recreation programs, common-area maintenance support from UBC of \$708,653, revenue from additional UNA programs, collections from parking enforcement, and external grants.

Combined, these sources are expected to provide the UNA with \$8,136,193 in spending power—an increase of 11 per cent from the 2023–2024 fiscal year.

In addition to core operations and

## Property Thefts on the Rise, UNA Board Told

*Directors received campus crime update from RCMP and debated local democracy during February board meeting.*

BY EMMANUEL SAMOGLU

Property thefts on UBC campus and the university neighbourhoods have risen sharply in the last year, the local RCMP detachment says.

Property thefts jumped 51 percent over 2022, followed by a 49 percent rise in traffic offenses and a 35 percent rise in fraud, Staff Sgt. Chuck Lan, the detachment's

commanding officer, said during a presentation to the UNA board of directors at February's monthly meeting.

Overall, calls for service rose from 3,214 in 2022 to 3,935 last year—a 22 per cent increase.

Lan said instances of fraud reported to police included scams targeting seniors, real estate scams, and what he called romance scams.

Other notable increases included a 23 per cent surge in assaults, a 19 per cent increase in reports of impaired driving, and a 22 per cent increase in reported motor



The university detachment of the RCMP reported a 51 per cent increase in property thefts between 2022 and 2023. (Photo: Elena\_Alex)

collisions.

On the other side, auto thefts declined 22 percent.

In other business, directors also discussed a UNA staff report that explored different approaches to filling vacancies on the board when they arise.

The report came about after the UNA's governance and human resources committee was presented with a research report last December on how other organizations similar to the UNA fill vacancies on their governing bodies.

Following that report, the committee asked staff to "prepare a draft process that would entail the UNA filling vacancies on

the board primarily through a byelection, but allowing for vacancies to be handled through appointment in certain situations."

There are currently two vacancies on the seven-member board following the resignations of Wesbrook Place resident Jane Kang earlier this year and Ali Mojdehi, who resigned last summer.

The report submitted to the board discussed the pros and cons of filling vacancies through either by-elections or through appointments. However, with elections scheduled for this fall, the board decided to defer any further action or the redrafting of existing bylaws.

The issue is expected to be discussed during upcoming monthly board meetings in advance to UNA elections, which are scheduled for this November.

EMMANUEL SAMOGLU IS MANAGING EDITOR OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT.

BY CAMPUS RESIDENT STAFF

# Introducing the UNA's New Chief Administrative Officer

Paul Thorkelsson has been on the job as the UNA's Chief Administrative Officer now since late January. And while it's a new role, the surroundings are familiar.

Thorkelsson studied at UBC in the early '90s, obtaining a graduate degree in architecture. He later completed a master's degree in public administration from the University of Victoria and an executive management certificate from the B.C. Board of Examiners, which is considered the highest certification in local government in the province.

Announcing Thorkelsson's appointment, the UNA said that Paul brings "a deep passion for good governance, transparency, fairness and diversity" and that he is excited about making a contribution to the UNA.

Thorkelsson previously held roles in private industry, in municipal government in B.C. and Alberta, as an elected official, and 11 years as a chief administrative officer in several municipalities including Saanich and Nanaimo.

"Paul's interests and skills will help the UNA in its leadership and municipal-like role within the community amidst UBC's rapid growth and development," the UNA said.

The Campus Resident caught up with Thorkelsson to see how he's settling into his new role.

**You've lived here before. What are your initial thoughts on returning to the university neighbourhoods?**

Remarkable changes to UBC have taken place since my time here as an undergrad and grad student in the 1990s. Walking

around campus is both a familiar experience and exciting in new discoveries. The place is incredibly beautiful, exciting, energetic, and full of opportunity.

**You have a diverse range of experience. How does working with small governments and organizations like the UNA compare with larger ones,**



UNA Chief Administrative Officer Paul Thorkelsson.

**and what attracts you most to this kind of work?**

My reasons for working in local government have always been the fundamental focus on good governance and excellence in service delivery at the level of government that is most directly connected to the community and residents.

This is certainly no different for me in this role with the UNA. Many of the issues faced locally are very much like other communities both large and small. The significant difference is in the governance structure for the UNA, which is about as unique as it gets. This certainly presents complications but is also one of the aspects that particularly draws me to working with the UNA at this point in my career.

**What do you expect to be some of the major challenges for the UNA in the short term, as well as the future?**

Like any municipal-service focused organization, the short-term challenges for the UNA will stem from the balancing of expectations and service levels against the resourcing necessary to provide those services at adequate and expected levels. The demands for increased levels of service, more direct involvement/participation in decision-making and building our community, additional responsibilities and effective and efficient service delivery are evident now, and are unlikely

to shrink in importance.

The medium and longer-term challenges for the UNA and residents will be building an understanding of, and managing, the shared nature of "municipal-like services" between UBC and UNA, and finding the ongoing balances of authorities, jurisdictions and responsibilities that best fit this unique and amazing community as it continues to grow.

**In your opinion, what are some of the most attractive aspects of living and working in this community?**

I think I said it earlier: the place is incredibly beautiful, exciting, energetic, and full of opportunity. As an architect, urban and rural planner, and municipal administrator, I see the UNA as embodying the qualities of urban living that many municipalities aspire to. There is a lot of discussion in strategic plans of municipalities across the province about the need and desire to build complete communities—places where citizens can live, work and play.

I don't think there is another place that has the same opportunity to really push the reality of a what a complete community is, while respecting the place, the history of this place and its context of constant change (environmental, social and economical).

**How far do you expect the Vancouver Canucks to go in this year's playoffs?**

I was born and raised in Edmonton. Even after 30-plus years as a resident of B.C., there is still only one NHL team whose playoff hopes matter. Sorry. 🍁

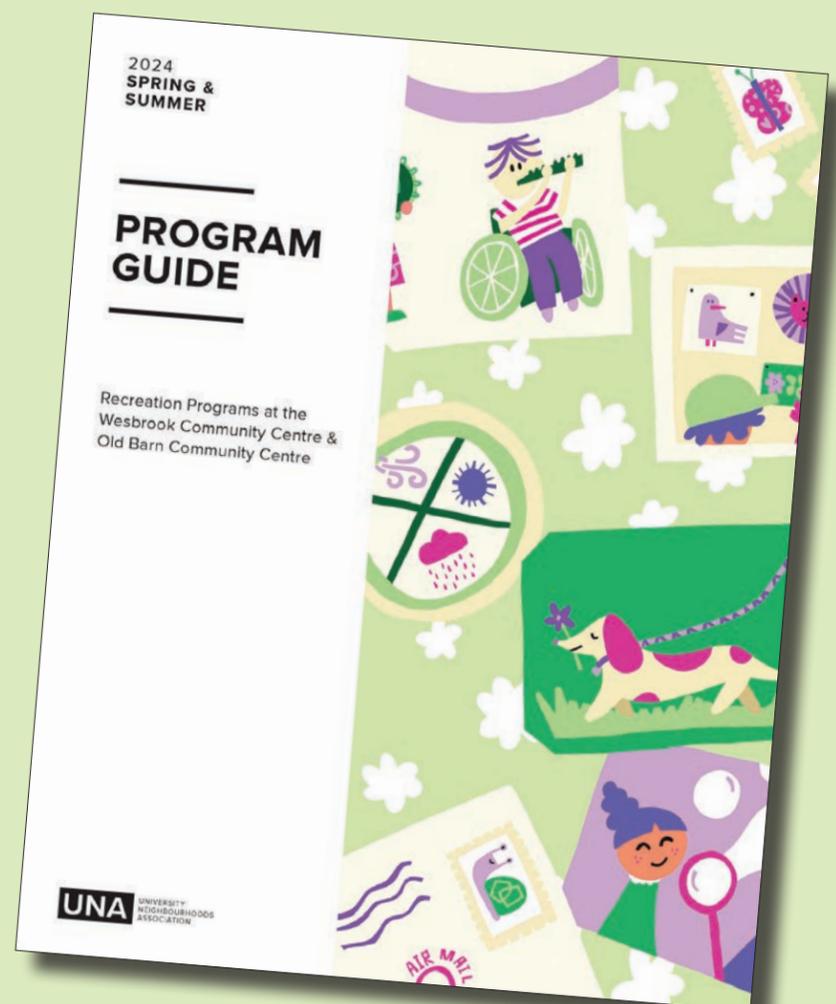


## REGISTER NOW OVER 200 PROGRAMS OFFERED

Work out in the new Old Barn Fitness Centre, sign up for English conversation classes, or join a camp! There's something for everyone at the UNA community centres.

Registration for Spring/Summer recreation programs is ongoing. **UNA Residents get a 10% discount.** Spots are limited, so sign up soon!

For more information, visit [myuna.ca/programs](https://myuna.ca/programs) or drop by the **Wesbrook Community Centre** (3335 Webber Ln.) or the **Old Barn Community Centre** (6308 Thunderbird Blvd.).



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OPINION

# The UNA's Budget Process is Robust

*Despite criticism from some members of the public, the UNA is in good fiscal health today and is expected to continue to be so into the future.*

BY BILL HOLMES

Recent public criticism of the UNA's budget process, and its draft operating budget for 2024/25 may have caused residents to become concerned that there's a serious problem with the UNA's process for developing budgets. As chair of the UNA's finance and audit committee, I can assure residents that the UNA's budget process is sound,

that the UNA's finances are healthy and are expected to continue to be so, and that the UNA is currently staffed appropriately for the level of services that residents expect and need. This article responds to three of the criticisms.

## UNA Board's Responsibility for Budgets

The UNA board has been accused of not adequately carrying out its oversight responsibility for the operating budget. The basis for this criticism is that the second draft of the budget for 2024/25 is almost identical to the first draft.

UNA staff prepare the first draft of the operating budget, having

regard to the UNA's core obligations and previously established board priorities and initiatives. The draft budget is provided to the board's finance committee for consideration. At the finance committee meeting, a thorough discussion of the draft budget occurs. Staff are questioned on budget items and changes may be proposed. The budget is then provided to the board. A second draft of the budget is prepared, and the process is repeated. Following an opportunity for public consultation, the (hopefully) final version of the budget goes to the finance committee and the board.

The lack of significant changes between the first and second drafts of the 2024/25 operating budget is not because directors were negligent in carrying out their responsibilities. Rather, staff developed a draft budget which directors did not see any reason to change significantly. Staff are to be commended for doing so.

The UNA does not have a lot of scope for flexibility in developing its operating budget. A large portion of its expenditures are fixed by its obligations, such as its obligations to provide municipal-like services for the neighbourhoods. Landscaping is a good example. The UNA has taken on landscaping responsibilities for the neighbourhoods, for which it engages subcontractors. The operational costs of the community centres are another example.

The last point I'd like to make about the development of the 2024/25 budget is that decisions

regarding several projects have been expressly left to the board. These are projects that it would be desirable to undertake but are not essential. The board will determine which, if any, of the projects will proceed. There's a placeholder of \$100,000 in the budget for these projects.

**"I note that residents who made the criticism have not identified any needs or priorities that, in their view, are not being met by the UNA. Residents are encouraged to let the UNA know if there's anything they would like the UNA to be doing (or not doing)."**

## Savings for Rainy Days

Turning now to another criticism: that insufficient money is being put aside to cover the risk that the UNA will face budget deficits in the future. Residents making the criticism point to the significant financial difficulties experienced by the UNA in the mid-to-late 2010s. They are concerned that the UNA could once again face financial difficulties and so would like a large amount of money saved for this eventuality.

There is a reserve available to the UNA if it encounters financial difficulties because the revenue from the services levy does not grow quickly enough. This reserve is maintained by UBC as part of the Neighbours Fund. The Neighbours Fund consists of accounts in UBC's financial records to which are credited the services levy payable by residents and the analogous amounts payable by UBC Properties Trust in respect of rental buildings. One per cent of the total services levies for each year is added to the reserve. The reserve will have a balance at the end of March of more than \$400,000.

In addition to this reserve, the UNA has surplus financial assets of approximately \$400,000 that can be used if revenues fall behind expenditures. Thus, the UNA does have some protection for "rainy days." Furthermore, if need be, it could reduce services.

It is extremely unlikely that the UNA will have to draw on these amounts in the foreseeable future. A financial projection for the next four years, prepared primarily by UBC, shows substantially increasing surpluses for the UNA.

I should add that there's also a contingency reserve in the Neighbours Fund, to be drawn on by the UNA to cover urgent, unexpected expenditures. This reserve has a balance of more than \$1 million.

The financial difficulties experienced by the UNA several years ago were the result of an unusual combination of circumstances. In brief, the Vancouver tax rate was declining while the rural property tax rate hardly changed, thereby squeezing the services levy rate. Property values in the neighbourhoods did not increase sufficiently to offset the reduction in the services levy rate. These circumstances are very unlikely to recur.

If more money were to be socked away in the reserve maintained by UBC, there would be a corresponding reduction in the amounts received by the UNA from the Neighbours Fund, and therefore a reduction in the services provided by the UNA. Given that there's only a remote prospect of the UNA facing financial difficulties, would residents prefer that more money be put aside for a rainy day and fewer services provided? I don't think so.

## Determining Residents' Needs and Priorities

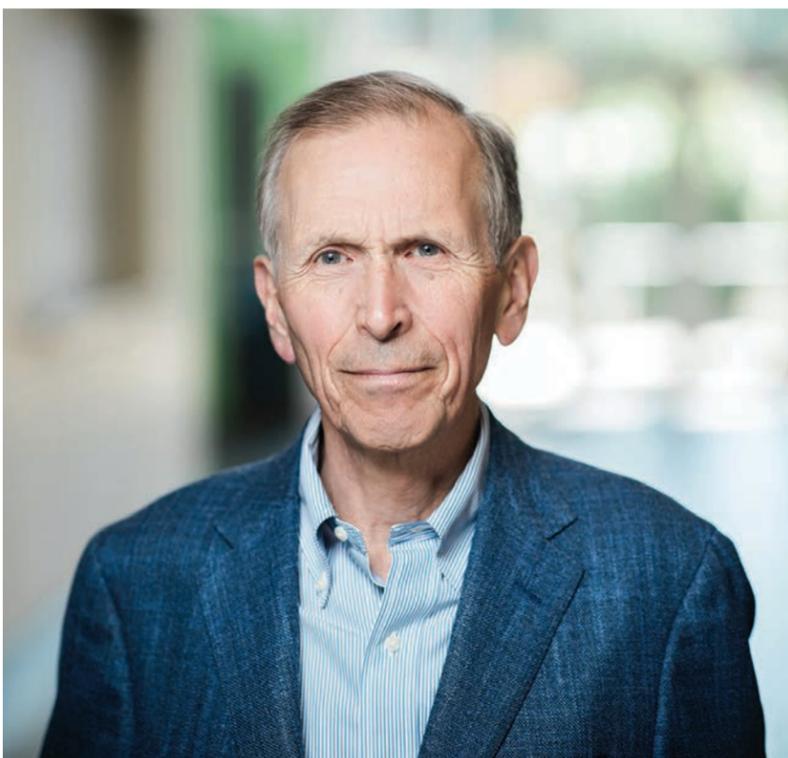
The last criticism I'll address is that the budget process does not include a determination of the community's needs and priorities through, for example, surveys and community meetings.

Determining the needs and priorities of the community happens separately from developing the budget. It is not tied to the budget cycle. It can happen throughout the year. A recent example is the UNA's Recreation and Culture Programming Review, undertaken with the assistance of consultants. The review, which included comprehensive community engagement, sought to identify gaps in current programming and to ensure that programming and events meet the needs of a growing and diverse community.

The needs and priorities are input to the budget process. The budget process has a limited purpose, namely, to produce an operating budget that is the financial framework for the UNA in the coming fiscal year and a mechanism for controlling expenditures.

I note that residents who made the criticism have not identified any needs or priorities that, in their view, are not being met by the UNA. Residents are encouraged to let the UNA know if there's anything they would like the UNA to be doing (or refrain from doing). There are several avenues for this, such as appearing as a delegation at a UNA board meeting, writing to directors or UNA staff, or submitting an article to *The Campus Resident*. 🐦

**BILL HOLMES** IS A UNA DIRECTOR AND MEMBER OF THE UNA'S FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE.



UNA director and finance & audit committee member Bill Holmes. (Photo: UNA)

OPINION

# Our Petition Calls for a More Effective Budget Process

A Chancellor Place resident has circulated an online petition that demands "... better financial management and a stronger community focus".

BY BRAD CHEN

First, I would like to express my gratitude to *The Campus Resident* for allowing me the opportunity to publish this op-ed. Although it contains some critiques of the UNA, the editorial team's decision to publish it reflects the newspaper's commitment to independence and the importance of diverse voices within our community.

The UNA's expenditure has nearly doubled from \$4 million in 2019 to an anticipated \$8 million in 2024. However, residents who are paying more in taxes have not observed significant positive changes in the community, raising concerns about the inefficient use of funds.

Since October last year, I have repeatedly raised concerns and provided detailed feedback regarding the UNA's operational efficiency and financial issues. This includes the board meeting on October 17, 2023, numerous emails, and multiple direct discussions with UNA board members.

Unfortunately, these efforts have not resulted in any substantive progress.

The new budget has failed to critically review past issues and continues with the previous budgeting approach.

This lack of action led me to initiate a petition on January 25th at <https://www.change.org/una-budget-2024> to amplify residents' concerns and their suggestions. As of January 31, the petition has received 322 signatures, with the number still growing.

Due to space constraints, I cannot fully reproduce the text of the petition here, but I would like to summarize the overarching concerns of UBC residents regarding the UNA 2024-25 Draft Budget:

1. *The annual budget is crucial for UNA's operations, yet there seems to be a lack of thorough review and oversight by the board. Although there are minutes of board meetings over the past nine months, the key budget review meetings in November 2023 and January 2024 lack records. Moreover, there's barely any change between the first and second drafts of the budget, raising questions about the board's commitment to its critical supervisory responsibilities.*

2. *Community-focused budgeting should be based on the needs and priorities of the community. Because the board uses ineffective outreach methods, there has been no feedback on this year's draft budget (from the first draft in November to the second draft on January 16), rendering the process a mere formality.*

*By contrast, a petition initiated by a resident like me garnered nearly 300 household signatures and feedback in just three days. What excuse does the UNA team, with dozens of full-time staff, have for failing to gather feedback? The UNA*

*board members and staff should step out of the office to engage directly with residents or start communicating with building strata councils for more effective feedback.*

3. *Without properly gathering information on the needs of the community, lacking real priority projects to compete for budget allocation, and missing active supervision and overall control by the UNA board, the budgeting process inevitably becomes a formality. This leads to inefficient allocation of funds and high management costs without direct outcomes. Specific expenditure issues are detailed in the petition and resident feedback that's been provoked by this petition.*

**"We believe there are significant problems with the goals and processes of the current UNA budget."**

we believe there are significant problems with the goals and processes of the current UNA budget.

If these issues are confirmed, we demand the budget be reformulated following a more appropriate process:

1. *Learn the community's needs: The association should collect information on community needs and priorities through surveys, community meetings, or direct dialogue with residents.*
2. *Evaluate the current financial situation: The association needs to review its current financial situation, including available funds, existing liabilities, and past income and expenses.*
3. *Establish goals and strategies: Based on community needs and financial status, the UNA should establish specific goals and strategies, such as increasing investment in certain projects or changing the distribution of funds.*
4. *Draft the budget: Detail all expected income and expenses, including fixed costs (like salaries and maintenance) and variable costs (for special projects or temporary activities).*
5. *Public transparency and resident participation: Keeping the process transparent and involving residents in the budgeting process is essential. Publicize the draft budget online and seek feedback.*
6. *Review and modify: Based on the feedback received, review and make necessary modifications to the draft budget.*
7. *Final Approval: After multiple discussions and adjustments, the final budget should be approved by the association's decision-making body.*
8. *Execution and Monitoring: When the approved budget enters execution phase, regular monitoring ensures that all expenses are in line with the plan.*
9. *Annual Assessment: At the end of the fiscal year, conduct an annual budget assessment to analyze the differences between actual income/expenses and the budget plan, and understand the reasons behind these differences.*
10. *Effective communication and resident participation are crucial throughout this process.*

A good community association focuses not only on the effectiveness of financial management but also values residents' opinions and needs, ensuring an inclusive and transparent budgeting process.

On behalf of nearly 300 UBC residents who joined the petition so far, we urge the UNA to take these inquiries and suggestions seriously, respond positively based on facts, and if necessary, reformulate the budget according to the process outlined above.

BRAD CHEN IS A RESIDENT OF CHANCELLOR PLACE.

We need a budgeting process that is more transparent and inclusive. Therefore, setting aside the specific budget items,



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A playground in Chancellor Place—a neighbourhood under the UNA's jurisdiction. (Photo: UNA)

A wave of sustainability and community engagement is taking shape on campus through the adoption of share economy practices.

From bike and car sharing programs to yard sales and community gardening, UBC and the University Neighborhoods Association (UNA) are setting benchmarks for environmental stewardship and social cohesion.

This shift towards share resources is not only promoting greener living but also fostering a sense of community among residents.

The Campus Resident has focused on several transformative efforts that are putting the sharing economy into practice.

### Share Mobility: A Ride Towards Sustainability

Adam Hyslop, the manager of transportation planning at UBC, is at the forefront of UBC's commitment to expanding share mobility as a cornerstone of its sustainable transportation strategy. In alignment with UBC's climate action and transportation plans, these initiatives are crucial for meeting the university's climate action and sustainable transportation targets. These services include:

**Bike Share:** UBC's on-campus bike share program, operated by HOPR, has been running since 2019 and includes 200 bikes located at over 90 hubs across both academic and neighbourhood areas of campus. The City of Vancouver's successful e-bike and bike share program operated by Mobi also began serving the campus in November 2023, enabling trips between UBC and Mobi stations throughout Vancouver. Thanks in part to funding from the province and TransLink, Hyslop said he anticipates 10–15 Mobi stations will be active on campus by the end of this year, with space for over 200 e-bikes.

More information on campus bike share programs and related discounts available to the UBC community can be found at: [planning.ubc.ca/bikeshare](https://planning.ubc.ca/bikeshare).

**Car Share:** The availability of car share vehicles makes it possible for community members to use sustainable modes of transportation by having access to a vehicle for occasional use at a relatively affordable cost. On-campus car share options include round-trip or two-way car share service provided by Modo and one-way or free-floating car share service provided by Evo.

Over 20 Modo vehicles are permanently located on campus, parked mostly within neighbourhood areas. Evo cars move around freely but can typically be found within UBC parking lots and parkades or in designated car share parking areas in the neighbourhoods.

More information on campus car share programs can be found at: [planning.ubc.ca/transportation/driving/car-sharing](https://planning.ubc.ca/transportation/driving/car-sharing).

### Enhancing Community Engagement through Share Initiatives

Robyn Chan, a sustainability specialist with the UNA, sheds light on how share economy initiatives extend beyond transportation to foster a sense of community and environmental responsibility.

Discussing the impact of yard sales,

# Embracing the Sharing Economy

*Local initiatives using the concept of a sharing economy are creating a sustainable and connected community.*

BY JENNIFER CHEN



Bicycles available for use by residents that are part of UBC's on-campus bike share program, which is operated by HOPR. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

bike repair tool sharing, and community gardening, Chan illustrates the multifaceted approach to sustainability on campus.

Yard sales, for instance, are more than mere transactions; they are community-building events, she says. "Yard sales contribute to the UNA's social and environmental sustainability goals."

But, she explains, "they also help keep things out of the landfill and help residents find good condition, used goods."

The bike repair stations and workshops further this ethos, making sustainable transportation and self-sufficiency more accessible.

The community gardens at the university neighbourhoods stand out as green spaces that promote environmental engagement and provide fresh produce.

"The UNA has over 200 community garden plots," Chan says. "They are another great community building tool and also provide residents with opportunities to get outside, get dirty, and grow their own food."

### 'Junk Amnesty Days': A Model of Practical Sustainability

So-called Junk Amnesty Days at the Keenleyside building in Wesbrook Place showcase a practical approach to sustainability. Initiated in November 2021, this semi-annual event offers a community-driven solution to waste reduction, allowing residents to discard unwanted items with the strata council covering removal costs.

"This event has proven to be extremely popular and greatly reduces the problem of unwanted junk," says Mary McBride, president of the Keenleyside strata council.

The initiative not only unclutters the physical space but encourages a mindset

of recycling and reusing among residents.

The initiative's framework is simple yet powerful, transforming the building's car wash space into a collection point for reusable or recyclable items over four days. This process not only facilitates environmentally responsible disposal but also promotes a culture of reuse among Keenleyside's residents. "It is not a huge effort by council, and student renters and long-term residents both benefit," McBride says.

### Challenges and Innovations in Share Economy Initiatives

While share economy initiatives in the university neighborhoods have garnered



One of the UNA's bike repair tool sharing stations in Wesbrook Place. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

praise and participation, there are also challenges.

Space constraints and the need for a sustainable balance between growth and resource management are recurrent themes. Chan discusses these hurdles, particularly in the context of tool sharing and community gardening. "We always have a challenge with space when it comes to finding places for sharing and repairing initiatives," Chan says.

Yet, she remains optimistic, saying there are "really great opportunities for collaboration with UBC" and the potential for new projects that the Neighbourhood Climate Action Plan may usher in.

The enthusiasm for share economy practices also extends beyond current offerings, with the community eagerly anticipating the introduction of new programs and platforms.

Among these, the MiniVillage app stands out as an example of how technology can facilitate the sharing of resources and strengthen community bonds.

Chan highlights the potential of the app. "It creates so many creative opportunities for people to share."

The platform exemplifies the innovative approach to expanding the share economy, enabling residents to easily share goods and services, thereby enhancing the community's sustainability efforts.

The commitment to expanding these initiatives is matched by a proactive approach to overcoming obstacles. Chan acknowledges these challenges but remains optimistic about finding creative solutions and opportunities for collaboration. "We are exploring a tool library and the best way to implement one for UNA residents," she says, underscoring the community's appetite for more inclusive and diverse sharing options.

### Community Feedback and Future Directions

The positive feedback from residents about share economy initiatives offers insights into their impact and areas for growth. "We measure success by the amount of people that come to our sales and workshops or use the Green Depot," Chan says.

This feedback loop between the community and program organizers is crucial for refining and expanding share economy practices and meeting evolving needs and preferences.

Looking to the future, the share economy at UBC is poised for further innovation and expansion.

The integration of new technologies, the exploration of new sharing platforms, and the continuous push towards sustainability promises to enrich the share economy landscape.

As the UNA and UBC continue to explore these new frontiers, the share economy lifestyle is set to become an even more integral part of the community experience.

JENNIFER CHEN IS A MEMBER OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT NEWSPAPER COMMITTEE.



## Event Clears Junk, Uncovers Useful Items for Residents

ed junk left behind in our garbage room, locker rooms, the lobby, and elsewhere.

It is not a huge effort by council, and student renters and long-term residents benefit through the recycling of old, but useful stuff.

Keenleyside residents are grateful to the council members who have contributed to its success by volunteering to organize our Junk Days.

### Here's how it works

The event is held in late April (for students leaving after Winter Session) and again in late November.

Almost anything that cannot be discarded in the garbage, recycling, composting, or at the UNA Green Depot is allowed. Items too large for the disposal truck and prohibited items such as propane gas canisters, paint, and electronics not taken by our junk disposal company are excluded.

For location, council appropriates our dedicated car wash space in the underground garage for a period of four days, from Thursday to Sunday.

Pick-up by our junk disposal company

occurs first thing Monday morning and is organized by council members. Our strata management company conducts on-site supervision of pick-up and takes care of payment.

The entire process takes about three weeks. We first notify our strata manager to book the junk removal and pick-up supervision. We then identify the dates for the event and draw up notices to inform residents. The notices are posted in our official noticeboards and other visible areas two weeks in advance and include dates, location, what's allowed to be discarded and what isn't, and an invitation to residents to pick up things that have been discarded that they might want.

The night before, council volunteers tape off the car wash so no-one can drive in. They then take our council meeting table to the car wash area with two signs: one reads "Please feel free to take anything you want" and the other says "Please don't take me" (meaning the table).

Then comes the fun. At first not much accumulates. However, from Friday night through to the weekend, a myriad of items show up: big, small, usable, and real junk. Residents come by, drop off stuff, and browse.

Over the years, residents have picked up children's games and toys, books, and furniture. By Sunday night, the car wash is usually full. Volunteers check the area periodically in case the space is too crowded or

is unsafe. They also check if any prohibited items have been left, in which case council is responsible for removal. Luckily, this has only happened once.

We book our removal truck for first thing Monday morning, with their staff picking everything up for delivery to the appropriate disposal site.

After pick-up, council volunteers check that the area is clean and empty, and remove signs, table, and tape, until the next junk day.

### Pros and Cons

For council, the benefits of Junk Days are that unwanted things do not end up inappropriately dumped in the building. For residents, it is an easy way to get rid of materials that are otherwise expensive and time-consuming to dispose of, and it is an opportunity to pick up unwanted but useful items.

On the negative side, it takes up time for council and volunteers, and the cost of disposal is increasing. We have to consider this when making our annual budgets.

However, residents are pleased with the service. I believe that this positive feeling benefits council in all our interactions with residents and owners. 🍃

MARY MCBRIDE IS THE PRESIDENT OF KEENLEYSIDE STRATA COUNCIL.

*'Junk Amnesty Days' at Keenleyside apartment building in Wesbrook promotes sharing economy while helping households de-clutter.*

BY MARY MCBRIDE AND THE KEENLEYSIDE STRATA COUNCIL

Since late 2021, the strata council for the Keenleyside apartment building in Wesbrook Place has been holding a four-day event twice a year that gives residents an opportunity to discard or give away stuff they no longer want. And best of all, council pays for removal.

This event, called Junk Amnesty Days, has proven to be extremely popular and greatly reduces the problem of unwanted

## Green Depot Usage on the Rise

BY ANNE ZHANG

The Green Depot has seen an exponential increase in usage with 2023 being its busiest year yet.

The UNA-run facility recycled, donated, and processed 19,974 kg worth of textiles, electronics, and plastics, double the amount in 2021.

The increase is being attributed to residents who are becoming regular users of the depot, as well as the increasing population of the university neighbourhoods.

The depot hired its second attendant, increased staff hours, all while having 18 volunteers keeping it running 7 days a week.

The facility was established by the UNA in 2021 and provides recycling services and responsible waste repurposing to the university neighbourhoods. It is operated by community volunteers and part-time workers, fulfilling its aims to be a sustainability initiative by decreasing landfill waste.

The Green Depot's function is multifaceted and provides resources to help residents manage their waste—the two most notable ones being the waste wizard tool and the in-person dropoff centre located at Wesbrook Community Centre.

The waste wizard, found at [www.myuna.ca/depot](http://www.myuna.ca/depot), is an easily accessible tool that provides options on how to dispose of various items and materials.

At the Green Depot, community members living in the university neighbourhoods, UBC staff and students, and U-Town Community Service card holders can drop off accepted items for free processing, and non-members can pay a \$5 fee to do so as well.

Some examples of what happens to materials after they are dropped off include:

- Clothes and Shoes: Donated or recycled
- Soft Plastics: Processed into new plastic bags
- Devices: Refurbished and donated or sold
- Household Electronics, Lightbulbs, etc: Recycled

UNA sustainability specialist Robyn Chan says that while the UNA loves to see more usage because it means that more things are being diverted from the landfill, "hopefully eventually usage will go down as consumption habits change and people purchase fewer things."

Some general challenges the Green Depot face include awareness and the need to constantly spread the word of their recycling initiatives. Organizers hope that as more people learn about the facility, word-of-mouth will also help to create more widespread use.

The Green Depot hopes to expand hours of operation to increase accessibility to residents, as well as to collaborate with UBC to open additional locations, offering specialty recycling services to as many people as possible.

Overall, the Green Depot's recycling and repurposing services are thriving and getting more usage than ever.

Not only do they decrease waste at landfills, they seek to educate residents about what to do when disposing of their items, creating a sustainable future for us all. 🍃



University Hill Secondary School student and Green Depot volunteer Joanne Lok. (Photo: Emmanuel Samoglou)

ANNE ZHANG IS A GRADE 11 STUDENT AT PRINCE OF WALES MINI SCHOOL AND LIVES IN HAMPTON PLACE.

# UBC Play Focuses on Confluence of Business, Labour and Religion



Artistic Director Jacob Zimmer with a model of the Jack Mosher-designed set for the upcoming play, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, which will be presented from April 3–13 at UBC's Frederic Wood Theatre. (Photo: Sophia Saugstad)

*Upcoming UBC Department of Theatre and Film performance Saint Joan of the Stockyards explores themes of capitalism, philanthropy, and "the struggle for solidarity."*

BY WARREN MCKINNON

A newsboy shouts, "Chicago Tribune, noon edition, P. Mauler, meat king and philanthropist, will attend the opening of the P. Mauler hospitals, largest and costliest in the world."

Another news boy cries out: "Meat king Lennox forced to shut down his plants! 70,000 workers without food or shelter! M.L. Lennox a victim of the fierce competitive struggle with Pierpont Mauler, well-known meat king and philanthropist"

These news items describe one of the main characters in Bertolt Brecht's play, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, to be presented April 3–13 at UBC's Frederic Wood Theatre.

Today's news agencies often add the words philanthropist to the names of business leaders, listing the many charities, hospitals, and universities they support. However, this philanthropic list doesn't often include labour associations or religious bodies. In Brecht's play, an appeal for Mauler's philanthropy and his soul, comes from Joan Dark, a member of the Straw Hats, a religious organization that resembles the Salvation Army.

To complete his master's degree in fine arts, Jacob Zimmer, a seasoned artistic director, has adapted Brecht's 1930 play so that it connects with our current reality. In that regard, he suggests the example of striking Uber drivers or charity fundraisers in North Vancouver relating to the impoverished dwellers in Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

In preparation for this play, Zimmer read, as did Brecht, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. It's a story about workers, Lithuanian immigrants, who either starved to death in the stockyards of Chicago or as writer Frederic Grab's puts it, "were known to have slipped once and emerged from the plant in lard cans."

Despite the dangers, working in

these plants was their only means of survival. Conditions become desperate when plants closed. In the words of Theatre UBC's online summary of the play, a "struggle for solidarity" among workers ensues.

The plant closings also tested the ministry of the Straw Hats. To understand the character of that ministry, Brecht, according to Grab, drew on his own experience of the Salvation Army as he walked the streets of Berlin with leader Elizabeth Hauptmann, visiting soup kitchens and talking with the souls they tried to save.

As Grab explains, "during the economic crisis of the late 1920s, one group [the Salvation Army] tried to combine goodness with practicality doling out soup, music and Christian love."

It was assumed that the Straw Hats ministry stood "above the battle" between monied moguls and plant workers. They were, as Joan Dark says, "Soldiers of the Lord" who marched with drums beating and flags flying," handing out their "Battle Cry" leaflets. But, as the play unfolds, we learn that Joan begins to question that assumption.

As director Zimmer explained, the drum beating, flag waving, and singing of the Straw Hats will be a feature of the play. Among the songs, he listed *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* and *All Things Bright and Beautiful*.

The play involves 3rd and 4th year bachelor of fine arts students: 22 cast members and 19 crew members in charge of such things as sound, lighting and stage management.

Preparations such as modelling the set began in January with a full cast established in February.

There are two staff members who, with help of students, are building the set. Director Zimmer expressed appreciation for the theatre's revolving stage.

Three plays are produced every year by the department of theatre and film. In addition to the Frederic Wood Theatre, plays are also presented at the Telus Studio Theatre in the Chan Centre.

Linda Pitt, the communications specialist for the department, advises that tickets can be purchased online at [theatrefilm.ubc.ca/events/saint-joan-of-the-stockyards](http://theatrefilm.ubc.ca/events/saint-joan-of-the-stockyards). For further details, visit [theatrefilm.ubc.ca](http://theatrefilm.ubc.ca).

For those planning to attend, Tony Koelwyn, the events and programming coordinator of audience services, reminds campus residents (members of the University Neighbourhoods Association) that they are eligible for two-for-one tickets.

WARREN MCKINNON IS A LONGTIME CAMPUS RESIDENT.

# Focus on Access to Justice at Upcoming Youth Law Event

*U Hill student participating in Youth Leaders in Law Conference, to be held on campus later this month.*

BY CAMI YU

An upcoming event on campus is targeting local youth who are passionate about a career in law and justice.

On March 30, the British Columbia Youth Leaders in Law Conference will take place at the Peter A. Allard School of Law, offering an opportunity for high school students interested in the field.

The event is being held by the B.C. chapter of Youth Leaders in Law, which is Vancouver's largest "by youth, for youth" legal organization, providing an opportunity for members to connect and interact with legal professionals and other like-minded individuals.

At this year's conference, the theme of "Access to Justice" will take centre stage. It's a concept that everyone should have an active voice and equal opportunities to navigate the legal system, regardless of their background or circumstances. This cross-section of law and activism will be explored in depth at the conference.

The conference features a law school admissions panel, interactive case study workshops, discussions, and speakers. From understanding legal rights to a lunch-time opportunity fair to interact with various non-profit organizations and law schools,



Participants at the 2023 British Columbia Youth Leaders in Law Conference, which was held at the Peter A. Allard School of Law on campus. (Photo: Juliana Manalou)

participants will gain insights into the role of law in voicing person-centred justice.

Mason Mattu, the president of Youth Leaders in Law B.C. says the conference "isn't just about providing youth with opportunities for a career in law, it's about highlighting our real issue of access to justice."

Last year, over 300 individuals attended the conference from all corners of the globe, and this year participants can expect to expand their horizons, sharpen their advocacy skills, and be part of a community dedicated to promoting fairness and equality for all.

Those who are interested can sign up by accessing the group's Instagram page at [instagram.com/youthleadersinlawbc](https://www.instagram.com/youthleadersinlawbc).

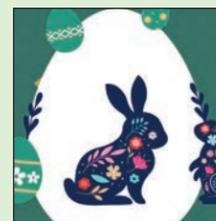
CAMI YU IS A GRADE 10 STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY HILL SECONDARY WITH AN INTEREST IN POLITICS, LAW, AND JOURNALISM.

## Upcoming Community Events Spring 2024



**March 8, 7:30 - 9:00 pm**  
**UBC Symphony Orchestra**

The 90-member orchestra performs at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts



**March 30, 9:30 - 11:00 am**  
**Easter at the Old Barn**

Enjoy crafts and participate in an Easter egg hunt



**April 6, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
**UNA Community Yard Sale**

Shop for gently used items at Wesbrook Community Centre



**April 6, 10:30 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Nature Club - Birds, Reptiles, and Amphibians**

Family event at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum

With spring right around the corner, it's the perfect time to start planning and planting your summer gardens.

Even if you don't have one of the UNA's coveted community garden plots, you still have lots of options for what you can plant on your balcony, terrace, or even inside your home.

The first step in is figuring out what kind of plants you want to grow—do you want a flower, vegetable, or herb garden? Or do you want a mixture?

Based on the kind of environment your balcony can offer, you'll then determine what plants you could grow.

Balconies are surprisingly versatile and can grow many kinds of plants, including shrubs, flowers, vegetables, and herbs. Mediterranean plants grow well on balconies, as do drought tolerant herbs like rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, and bay. Strawberries and radishes are great for balconies as well and are easy for beginners to grow.

One of the best plants for novice balcony gardeners is lavender. It doesn't require lots of care, has many potential uses, and bees love it. Lavender does need lots of sun to grow, so if your balcony doesn't get lots of sun, this might not be the best plant for you.

When choosing which plants to grow on your balcony, there are a few things you should keep in mind. The most important is how much sun your balcony gets. Whether your balcony gets lots of sunlight or is mostly in the shade will determine which plants you can grow on it.

In addition, some plants are not suited to growing on balconies, like climbing plants, as they tend to be affected by wind. Before buying your plants, make sure they're suited for the kind of environment your balcony offers.

If you're planting your garden by seed,

## Gardening Can Yield Bountiful Rewards

*With spring approaching, now is the perfect time to start thinking about planting your garden.*

BY AMIE BERNAERDT



Community garden plots in Wesbrook Place. (Photo: UNA)

you will also want to consider when to plant them. Know when the last frost date in Vancouver is before you start growing, otherwise your plants can die if they're grown too early. The last frost date varies in Vancouver—it is usually in March, but can fall between February 25th and April 10th. A good rule of thumb is to wait to start growing until temperatures are 10 degrees Celsius at night.

For Vancouver's climate, growing smaller varieties of fruits and vegetables—like cherry tomatoes instead of beefsteak tomatoes—tends to lead to more success. This is because we have longer growing seasons, but less sun.

Personally, I grow mostly decorative plants inside my room. I'm definitely not a pro gardener, but if I could offer any advice it's that you should make sure you get plants that are within your skill range. Get ones that require little care, because those ones will flourish (and won't mysteriously die on you).

Most of the plants I grow are succulents, because they're very low-maintenance. I also have a fern, a jade plant, a marble peperomia, a rubber tree, and a creeping inchplant.

If you're stuck on which plants you should grow, check out the Grow Green Guide ([growgreenguide.ca](http://growgreenguide.ca)). This guide was put together by the UBC Botanical Garden and Metro Vancouver and can help gardeners pick which plants will do best in any given garden.

For those who may not want to garden on their balconies, they can apply through their UNA accounts for a plot in one of the community gardens, but keep in mind these gardens are incredibly popular. In 2020, there was a big spike in waitlist applications, and it is only expected to get longer as more people move to campus. There are currently 602 people on the waiting and transfer list and only

246 plots. Nineteen plots are expected to be vacated in the next year. If you applied today, it would likely take 4-5 years to get a garden plot.

As of right now, there are no plans to add more garden plots. But given their popularity, hopefully more space will be set aside on campus for community gardens.

They could also be incorporated into new developments and neighbourhood plans, or vacant land waiting to be developed could be turned into temporary gardens, much like the City of Vancouver does.

There are many benefits associated with gardening. Spending time in nature, even if it's just growing a small garden on your balcony, can be good for your physical and mental health.

I find my plants bring me a lot of joy. They're not a lot of work, but they make my room feel much cozier. They bring a piece of nature inside.

With gardening, I think there's a lot of benefits you can derive from it, some of which are not blatantly obvious when you begin but end up bringing you unexpected joy.

Gardening can also give your family delicious, nutritious fruits and vegetables to eat. With food prices going up, this option becomes ever more appealing.

Finally, gardening can also create opportunities for social connections. Especially in community gardens, gardening provides a way to connect with your fellow neighbours and to learn about food and nature alongside them.

With spring about to begin, now is the perfect time to take up gardening. 🌱

AMIE BERNAERDT IS A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AT UBC WITH PLANS TO MAJOR IN CREATIVE WRITING OR ANTHROPOLOGY. SHE LIVES IN WESBROOK PLACE.

## Repairs Won't Interfere with Frog Breeding Season: UBC

*Pacific tree frogs commonly found in shallow bodies of water throughout Wesbrook Place and throughout the Point Grey campus help control mosquito populations.*

BY ROBYN STARKEY

UBC officials overseeing repairs of the troubled Webber Lane waterway are ensuring ongoing work will not interfere with the upcoming Pacific tree frog breeding season.

As reported in the February issue of The Campus Resident, after repairs on Mundell Pond were completed late last year, testing showed a significant amount of water was still leaking in the waterway, which runs in a

southward direction though the eastern section of Wesbrook Place.

But despite ongoing testing, the source of the leaks has not been identified.

According to UBC Properties Trust, "the waterway's underground mechanical system is complex" and "requires detailed multi-step testing of each component."

Repair work and investigations into the leaks began in 2022 and are continuing, but with the arrival of spring, UBCPT said the work must take into account the impending return of the small and vocal amphibians and adhere to environmental best practices.

As communicated in a late February update on their website, UBCPT said that "a biologist will ensure investigation and

repair work does not interfere with the upcoming Pacific tree frog tadpole breeding season. If work is not resolved on time, the BC Wildlife Act will be followed."

But what exactly is the deal with Pacific tree frogs?

The frogs are on the provincial Yellow List of species managed at the ecosystem level. Because the frogs can live in a variety of habitats, they are not considered at risk; however, they are protected under the British Columbia Wildlife Act.

Early spring marks the breeding season, when the Pacific tree frogs are vocal in the evening, particularly around shallow bodies of water like the Webber Lane waterway and Mundell Pond. The noise they make, called a choral song, is distinctive and can be surprisingly loud. There are fewer frogs than you think - one older frog can sound like several frogs.

Pacific tree frogs can live in all kinds of vegetation near water, and since the sticky pads on their toes allow them to climb, you may find them enjoying the plants on your patio or balcony. The frogs can range in colour from bright green to brown, and individuals can even change colour.

The frogs eat a variety of insects,

which helps keep down the mosquito numbers in and around the waterway. Since they are abundant, they also provide an important food source for a variety of animals, including garter snakes, mammals and birds.

Frogs are an important part of biodiversity, and frog numbers can provide information about the health of an environment. BC Frog Watch is a group of researchers who work with the public to collect information about frog numbers.

According to a wildlife officer at the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals who spoke to The Campus Resident, capturing or otherwise interfering with the tadpoles and frogs is prohibited. Catching and releasing tadpoles does have potential for harm to the animals. Small children may accidentally drop or otherwise unintentionally damage tadpoles, so playing with tadpoles or catch and release should be avoided. Listen, but don't touch! 🌱

ROBYN STARKEY IS A WESBROOK PLACE RESIDENT AND A MEMBER OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE.



A Pacific tree frog in Wesbrook Place. (Photo: Cassius Hesperus).

# Welcoming the Year of the Dragon



*Roughly 1,600 attend community-run Lunar New Year Festivities at Wesbrook Community Centre.*

PHOTOS AND STORY BY ADA BUCUR

**H**undreds of people gathered Feb. 11 to celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Wesbrook Community Centre. All the rooms on the ground floor, including the gymnasium, were adorned with ornaments and colours specific to the event.

Everywhere one turned, there were activities for people of all ages, including bamboo weaving, calligraphy, traditional flower arranging, and arts and crafts.

With the assistance of dozens of UNA volunteers, attendees—from small children to grandparents—enjoyed festivities that included dancing, Korean drumming, Chinese classical music, and cultural performances led by residents. Additionally, a variety of sweets, teas, fruits, and

snacks were available.

This year, the central figure of the celebration was the dragon.

The Lunar New Year marks the beginning of the lunar calendar year. It is celebrated by various East and Southeast Asian cultures, including Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tibetan communities, among others. The date of the Lunar New Year varies each year, typically falling between late January and mid-February, depending on the lunar calendar.

The significance of the Lunar New Year lies in its association with new beginnings, renewal, and the welcoming of good fortune and prosperity for the upcoming year.

Each year in the Chinese zodiac cycle is associated with one of the twelve animals, which rotate in a fixed order: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. Each animal is believed to have specific characteristics that influence one's personality traits and events of the year.

The Year of the Dragon is considered particularly auspicious in the Chinese zodiac cycle. Dragons are revered creatures symbolizing power, strength, and good luck. Therefore, the Year of the Dragon is often associated with prosperity, success, and significant achievements.

During the Lunar New Year celebrations, customs and traditions vary among different cultures but often include activities such as family reunions, feasting on traditional foods, giving and receiving red envelopes (containing money, symbolizing good luck).

Other customs include setting off firecrackers to ward off evil spirits and displaying decorations symbolizing prosperity and good fortune such as red lanterns and paper cut-outs with encouraging phrases.

Overall, the Lunar New Year is a joyous and vibrant celebration, and the community-run event held at Wesbrook Community Center successfully conveyed that feeling to those who took part in the festivities. 🐉





IN OUR WORDS

# Keeping Chinese Folk Dance Traditions Alive

*The year of the dragon is here.*

VIVIAN SU AND GLORIA GUI



Members of Emily Dance Group, who performed at this year's Lunar New Year Celebrations at Wesbrook Community Centre. (Photo: Emily Dance Group)

**D**uring the recent lunar new year's celebration events at Wesbrook Community Centre, Emily Dance Group performed its dance, "Gentle Breeze and Light Rain," which is described as a fusion of modern and traditional Chinese folk dancing.

We were grateful to be part of the group of performers at the event, wearing our dresses, designed in the Chinese Cheongsam (qipao) style, holding silk fans, and dancing gracefully with soothing music. The aim of our dance was to express the feeling of a woman in love, in a beautiful world filled with joy.

Emily Dance Group started over 10 years ago in the university neighbourhoods. Dance teacher Emily Li and her family immigrated to Canada and have been living here on UBC Campus since 2005.

She graduated from Minzu University of China in

Beijing with a bachelor's degree in dance education. Over the past decade, Emily has shared her knowledge of dance professionally with her fellow campus residents. Every year Emily and her students love to share their talents and celebrate the traditional holidays together.

On the second floor of Wesbrook Community Centre, as we rehearse, sunlight shines through the window from the south, touching down on our fluttering dresses. It is here where we love to keep learning and practicing to dance. Especially in this studio, with great views and a walkable distance from our homes.

VIVIAN SU IS A MEMBER OF THE CAMPUS RESIDENT NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE AND EMILY DANCE GROUP.

GLORIA GUI IS A MEMBER OF EMILY DANCE GROUP AND LIVES IN THE UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS.

# Marking the Arrival of Spring and New Beginnings

*Campus residents prepare for Nowruz, an ancient celebration that dates back thousands of years.*

BY POURIA KARIMI

In the Northern Hemisphere this year, March 19 is the date that officially marks the beginning of spring.

But for more than 300 million people around the world, it is also the beginning of a new year.

Nowruz, which translates into “New Day,” is the Persian new year and a celebration that’s rooted in history and culture.

With its origins dating back thousands of years, Nowruz marks the arrival of spring and symbolizes renewal and hope.

It’s a cherished cultural tradition with a fascinating history, exuberant rituals, joyous celebrations, and one that unites communities with hope and fresh beginnings.

The celebration has been inherited from the religions of Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. Thus, it has a Persian birth certificate and is referred to as a symbol of connecting Persian people and the nations of Persia.

It continues to be one of the holy days

and religious holidays of Zoroastrians and Bahais, and is an official holiday in countries such as Tajikistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, Iraq, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Albania, China, and Uzbekistan. As a result, it has been registered by UNESCO on its list of the Intangible Cultural Heritages of Humanity.

Nowruz celebrations begin with the customs of Chaharshanbeh Suri. Practiced since ancient times, a custom of lighting a fire has been common in Iran, Azerbaijan and parts of Afghanistan on the last Wednesday of the year (the same Wednesday as Chaharshanbeh Suri).

Another tradition of Nowruz Eid in Iran is house cleaning, when household items and furniture are dusted, washed, and cleaned. The people of countries like Afghanistan and Tajikistan also follow this custom.

Lastly, in the history and customs of Nowruz Eid, seven items are spread around a table, with each one representing a blessing of life. This is known the Haft-Sin table.

The seven items of the Haft-Sin table include Sabzeh (wheat, barley, or lentil



sprouts grown in a dish); Samanoo (a sweet pudding dish); Senjed (fruit from a lotus tree); Serkeh (vinegar); Seeb (an apple); Seer (garlic); and Somaq (sumac). All of the items are laid upon a special cloth, which is called a sofreh. Additionally, a mirror, candles, goldfish, and the Qur’an are also included on the table.

In all, Nowruz represents the strong and resilient character of the Persian-speaking world and the other cultures and nations who celebrate this holiday.

**Nowruz, which translates into “New Day,” is the Persian new year and a celebration that’s rooted in history and culture.**

POURIA KARIMI ATTENDS UNIVERSITY HILL SECONDARY.

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# UNA CARD

UNA UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION

With a UNA Card, UNA residents get free access or discounts to various UBC recreation and cultural facilities, the Vancouver Public Library and UNA community centres.

Learn about the benefits of getting your UNA Card at [myuna.ca/card](https://myuna.ca/card)

**UNA** UNIVERSITY NEIGHBOURHOODS ASSOCIATION

**NEW**

## HAMPTON PARKING ENFORCEMENT STARTING APRIL 2, 2024

The UNA will be implementing a phased roll-out of parking enforcement in **Hampton Place** which will eventually bring it to the same level as other neighbourhoods.

- April 2:** Hampton Place residents can begin applying for resident and visitor parking permits online or in-person.
- April 2:** Enforcement in ‘NO PARKING ZONES’ begin. No vehicles may park in ‘NO PARKING ZONES’.
- May 1:** Enforcement in ‘PERMIT ONLY ZONES’ begin. A Hampton Resident Parking Permit or a Hampton Visitor Parking Permit will be required in ‘PERMIT ONLY ZONES’ to avoid towing and parking violations.

To apply for a parking permit, starting April 2, please visit the website below or drop by the Wesbrook Community Centre.

For more information, visit [myuna.ca/parking](https://myuna.ca/parking) or scan the code: