

Game

Club

Community

Vancouver United FC

2026-30 STRATEGIC PLAN



Our club

A community aligned, fiscally secure, growing, ambitious, professionally run, soccer club that supports a personal, diverse and inclusive playing environment.

“The goal for this club is to be the choice of young footballers across the city not through marketing but through being an example of excellence across all our strategic objectives.”

Mark Cylwa, VUFC President



Overview



The VUFC Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 is the result of two years of ongoing consultation with members and work with third party consultants. This has led us to the creation of establishing six strategic pillars that will both ground the club and move it forward. Work on these initiatives has already begun and progress will be charted through our Operational Plan.

After an initial SWOT analysis and member survey conducted by Capitis Consulting that was dissected by our Strategic Planning Committee, composed of Board members and the Executive Director¹, strategic initiatives were identified and work began on choosing priorities and objectives within those initiatives.

From there, work was completed on a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) plan that was led by Inclusion Incorporated and then supported by a volunteer committee of club members² who provided feedback that helped shape the final version of the plan. The Club also struck a committee of four women who coached at various levels and ages within the club to lead the Advancing Girls Soccer Initiative (AGSI)³. This has resulted in a report with almost 50 recommendations.

The Board's Facilities Committee has looked at various creative ways we can attain sufficient access to high quality fields. Staff participation on Park Board's Field Use Strategy working group⁴ over two years helped allow the city to prioritize the construction of new artificial turf fields and the installation of lights at two others.

Overview, cont.



Additionally, technical staff have participated in ongoing meetings with BC Soccer, BCCSL and BCSPCL clubs to improve training and game standards.⁵ So while work has begun in some areas of the Strategic Plan already it is an ambitious document that will evolve over the next five years. We will report on progress that has been made in the six strategic pillars through our monthly newsletters, social media and AGM reports.

We will continue to engage members, contractors and subject area experts as necessary in some of these initiatives as we already have to ensure we keep moving VanU forward and to the best version of a youth club that can exist.

Gregor Young
Executive Director

Footnotes

- 1. The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of the following Board members: Brent Loewen, Mark Damm, Mark Cylwa and Michelle Armstrong in addition to Executive Director Gregor Young.*
- 2. DEI Committee members: Johanna Navas, Celena Benndorf, Beth Hirsch, Leila Harris, Michelle Mollineux, Vanessa Lee, Gillian Ani, Christine Chen*
- 3. AGSI Committee members: Suzanne Chiasson, Carlie Condon, Beth Hirsch, Sarah Johns*
- 4. Park Board Working Group: Director of Operations Loretta Abdi, Gregor Young*
- 5. TD Gus Karvelis and Asst TD Maurice Hayes have participated in BCCSL re-tiering committees, BCSPCL Operational and Technical Committees and intra-BCSPCL club meetings.*

Operational excellence

Member expectations of their youth soccer club have grown exponentially over the years. Its incumbent on us as a club to meet those expectations.

We do this through ensuring the club is staffed appropriately and with people who are excellent in their field while providing them with the tools, support and environment they need to excel.

Strategic alliances

The club will continue its work to develop relationships that will benefit its members.

We lead with our reputation as an ethical, progressive club that wants to provide an environment that provides space for all of its players to enjoy playing here through until their last youth game at U18 and into adult soccer.

We will work reciprocally with groups that are aligned with those values and can help us continue to improve what we're able to offer our players.

Field security

VanU has an ongoing need to secure excellent playing surfaces for its players.

The club is committed to providing the best fields to all its players regardless of age, level or program.

We will look for creative solutions to the problem and develop capital reserves that will allow us to act quickly on any opportunities that arise.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Our game should be for everyone who wants to play it. Everyone who wants to be part of a team and experience all the positive aspects of it along with all the challenges.

VanU has long been committed to making sure everyone who wants to play at this club is able to. Our policies and initiatives reflect that and our recent work on a DEI plan reinforce it.

The implementation of that plan will ensure we are even better in this area and in turn create an even stronger club.

Financial security

Continue to run the club in a financially responsible and respectful way.

Ensure the club has the ability to both survive any economic uncertainty or downturn while also being prepared to invest in the game when and where opportunities arise.

Work with highly credentialed and respected third parties for bookkeeping and the preparation of financials to ensure member confidence in all aspects of our finances.

Balance financial goals while respecting members' personal financial situations regarding registration fees.

Pathways to growth

The club faces challenges, supported by census data, related demographics. As fewer people are able to afford living in Vancouver and in particular the west side, the pool of potential players dwindles.

We will look at creative ways to grow organically and also by targeting specific areas where we feel we can provide club programming closer to where players live.

We also look at adopting new programming and adapting current programming to ensure we are offering what families can manage in terms of their time and budget.

Outcomes: Operational excellence

1. Recruit and retain the best staff possible for all critical roles at the club. Invest in staffing excellence through professional development and attractive remuneration.
2. Prioritize player safety by having a dedicated Board member in this role and contracting arms-length Ombudsperson to adjudicate complaints, protests and appeals. Incorporate this into the club culture through use of invited speakers, social media, club newsletters and ensuring staff, board members and volunteer team officials all conform to requirements in the Player Safety section of the National Youth Club License.
3. Staffing excellence (off field): Maintain staffing levels that meet the needs of club programming; support necessary professional development; structure staffing to efficiently cover all tasks and objectives; put the best people in positions where they can excel and help the club improve.
4. Ensure the necessary tools that staff and volunteers need are available to them to fulfill their roles effectively and without delay.
5. Provide effective communication to members through all chosen channels
6. Ensure staff communicate professionally in a timely manner that ensures accountability

Outcomes: Strategic alliances

1. Develop alliances with like-minded, ambitious clubs for co-operative projects and initiatives to move the game forward and create memorable, enriching experiences for players and volunteers. These can be local, regional, national or international.
2. Work cooperatively with Vancouver Park Board and City of Vancouver staff for the betterment of the game and to maintain a solid, professional relationship as it relates to equitable access to fields and policy around attaining permits for them.
3. Continue to work with the City of Vancouver as requested at the committee and working group level.
4. Maintain good working relationships with BC Soccer and the Canadian Soccer Association through participation in committees, meetings and coaching opportunities for our staff on Provincial and National teams as well as seminars offered by these bodies.
5. Seek out businesses in our community that would like to partner with a youth soccer club that shares their values. This could be around infrastructure projects, sustaining the VanU Community Fund or supporting our other inclusion efforts.

Outcomes: Field security

1. Pro-actively look to advance the club's need for quality playing and training surfaces both in public and private spaces.
2. Engage current and potential field owners on projects that provide long term access to quality fields
3. Look to ensure field costs remain reasonable and do not constitute a financial burden to members.

Outcomes: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

1. Develop meaningful, achievable objectives, policies and goals to further our goal of creating great people through the game of soccer.
2. Develop financial resources to ensure financial issues do not preclude any child from playing with the club.
3. Recognize barriers in all forms and look to remove them.
4. Ensure fairness, safety and enjoyment of the game for all players at all age groups and levels of play so they feel welcome and want to continue playing year after year.
5. Implement the recommendations developed by the Advancing Girls Soccer Initiative as approved by the Board.

Outcomes: Financial Security

1. Continue to develop financial confidence and stability at the club. Maintain and improve the strong oversight and visibility for the Board to see and approve all necessary expenditures.
2. Conform to CSA National Youth Club License requirements around maintaining surplus commensurate with established expenses.
3. Use surpluses to fund opportunities that benefit the club.
4. Budget accurately and in a timely manner.

Outcomes: Pathways to growth

1. Look to overcome existing demographic challenges in our traditional base for registrations by offering programming closer to where players increasingly live.
2. Look to form partnerships with clubs that facilitate joint programming. Consider strategic partnerships and mergers.
3. Be an example of excellence in youth football to leverage word of mouth recommendations to those not playing or playing elsewhere.
4. Look for creative opportunities to expand programming by type, location, duration, age, level and cost.