

3 Regional Context Statement



Part 25 of the *Local Government Act* sets out specific requirements for a regional context statement for any municipality that is part of an adopted Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The purpose of a regional context statement is to provide a link between the OCP and the RGS by specifying how a municipality intends to achieve the goals of the RGS.

Along with approval by City Council, through the adoption of the OCP, the regional context statement is reviewed by the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) - a committee with membership from the City of Nanaimo, Regional District of Nanaimo, Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville, District of Lantzville, and representatives from key government agencies. The regional context statement has been approved by the RDN's Board of Directors. Through this regional context statement, planNanaimo's policies are linked to the Regional Growth Strategy goals for managing growth through urban containment and nodal development, protecting the integrity of rural areas, protecting environmentally sensitive features, improving service efficiency, and initiating cooperation among jurisdictions.

This regional context statement will be reviewed by the Regional District of Nanaimo and the City of Nanaimo. Any additions, deletions and amendments to the policies in planNanaimo may result in

inconsistencies with the Regional Growth Strategy and require the need for the RDN, member municipalities, and the City to come to a consensus about the proposed amendment and prepare an amendment to the regional context statement.

3.1 Objectives

To cooperate in defining a sustainable regional future for the Regional District of Nanaimo and member municipalities. Policies and actions work to achieve the overall vision of the Regional Growth Strategy.

To ensure consistency in planNanaimo and the Regional Growth Strategy. Objectives and policies in planNanaimo show a direct relationship to the goals and related policies in the Regional Growth Strategy.

To maintain Nanaimo as a regional centre. Enhance the city's role as a population, economic and service centre for the Regional District of Nanaimo and mid-island area.

To anticipate growth. Plan for and accept the city's share of regional growth.

To maintain consistency. Coordinate city growth management planning initiatives with other member municipalities and Snuneymuxw First Nation.

To maintain involvement in the future. Actively work with member municipalities and the Regional District of Nanaimo to ensure future amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy remain consistent with the city's objectives and the policies of planNanaimo.

3.2 Regional Context Statement

This Plan achieves consistency with the RGS goals as follows:

RGS Goal 1 Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption

To reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption, and promote adaptive measures to prepare for climate change impacts.

The City's Official Community Plan, planNanaimo, is based upon a guiding principle of sustainability. This guiding principle is supported through goals and objectives that address climate change and energy consumption, urban growth and land use, and transportation modes and mobility patterns. Greenhouse gas emissions targets (GHGs) will be achieved through reducing emissions from corporate buildings and vehicle fleets, encouraging healthy, compact, mixed use developments, and providing and promoting effective transportation systems and alternative modes of travel.

RGS Goal 2

Protect the Environment

To protect and enhance the environment and minimize ecological damage related to growth and development.

An ever increasing focus on the care and stewardship of the environment is an important characteristic of this Plan. New standards have been developed to protect not only designated park spaces but also those green corridors that provide connections and habitat for wildlife. The clustering of development in urban nodes and corridors, along with the sensitive development of existing underdeveloped or undeveloped parcels will also work toward protecting significant land features and environmentally sensitive areas.

The City of Nanaimo has put a great deal of effort into developing policies and bylaws to protect the environment and minimize the impact of growth on existing environmentally sensitive areas and green space. Development Permit Areas are mapped and the guidelines serve to protect the foreshore, watercourses, steep slopes, and sensitive ecosystems found within the City's boundaries. Policies also outline measures to be taken respecting water supply and water conservation, and improving air quality through alternative transportation.

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RGS Goal 3 Coordinate Land Use and Mobility
 To ensure land use patterns and mobility networks are mutually supportive and work together to reduce automobile dependency and provide for efficient goods movement.

planNanaimo sets out specific policies and actions to achieve Goal 3 of the Regional Growth Strategy, building on the success of initiatives developed from Imagine Nanaimo and Plan Nanaimo. It is anticipated that the evolution of the urban nodes and corridors, as mixed use centres, will not only make transit routes more viable in the future, but will overall reduce automobile dependency. This is also true of other commercial centres and industrial areas, which are located to take advantage of major roads, rail lines and ocean routes for movement of goods.

The development of the E&N Trail, Parkway Trail, and numerous cycle routes and linkages are a direct result of community involvement in creating new mobility options. Walking and cycling are increasing in use in this active community, and planNanaimo supports the development of future options for non motorized transportation, for recreational purposes, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to allow safe travel for a wide range of purposes including work, shopping, and education.

RGS Goal 4 Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Growth Centres
 To establish distinctive activity centres that provide ready access to places to live, work, play and learn.

The Regional Growth Strategy has identified that growth should be directed to Regional Urban Centres, such as Nanaimo, and to other Urban Centres and Rural Village Centres. These areas are delineated by a Growth Containment Boundary, which in the case of Nanaimo is contiguous with its municipal boundary. In addition, the City has, through its OCP, identified an Urban Containment Boundary that is contained both within the GCB and municipal boundary, and is recognized in Policy 4.1 of the Regional Growth Strategy. OCP policies direct urban growth and servicing to those properties inside the Urban Containment Boundary only. Lands outside the Urban Containment Boundary are reserved for resource lands including lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, parks and open space, and limited residential uses at rural densities without municipal water and sewer services.

planNanaimo supports the maintenance of both the Growth Containment Boundary (GCB) and the City's Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) to provide the focus for current and future urban development in Nanaimo. Sufficient underdeveloped or

undeveloped lands are available to accommodate future growth for the next 20 to 25 years.

Within the UCB, it is anticipated that overall densities will rise in the next 20 to 25 years, creating a more urban environment within the city. planNanaimo supports new forms of higher density residential development within the UCB and in defined Urban Nodes and Corridors. It is anticipated that the expansion of housing options will meet the needs of Nanaimo's growing and aging population.

The UCB also contains lands designated for future commercial and industrial growth. Community services will not be provided outside the UCB, except for health or environmental reasons.

The City will be conducting a targeted review of the OCP during the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014. As part of that review the City will revise Map 1 - Future Land Use Plan to indicate that the City Boundary and the RGS Growth Containment Boundary are contiguous. It is not expected that any Resource Protection or Parks and Open Space lands outside the UCB will be developed for urban growth and moved inside the UCB within the term of the Plan.

RGS Goal 5
Enhance Rural Integrity
 To protect and strengthen the region's rural economy and lifestyle.

There are very few areas of rural lands within city limits. The delineation of the UCB serves to focus urban growth, to preserve

ALR lands and environmentally sensitive areas, and to protect rural areas from higher density urban development. The UCB provides a clear separation between community serviced lands and those agricultural lands, forestry lands, and environmentally sensitive areas intended to be protected in the long term. Focusing growth to the urban nodes and corridors will also minimize the impacts of development on the lands outside the UCB.

This OCP does not support the extension of urban services outside the UCB. In addition, all regulations and policies of the Agricultural Land Commission are fully supported for ALR lands within the Plan area, including policies supporting buffering on adjacent developable lands.

RGS Goal 6
Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing
 To support and facilitate the provision of appropriate, adequate, affordable, attainable and adaptable housing.

planNanaimo recognizes the importance of creating opportunities for the development of new affordable housing, as well as maintaining the existing stock of affordable housing. Land use policies provide opportunity for a range of housing types, and particularly within mixed use areas such as urban nodes and corridors. This mix of affordable housing forms is then encouraged through private development and / or financial support to non profit housing societies.

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RGS Goal 7

Enhance Economic Resiliency

To support strategic economic development and link commercial and industrial strategies to the land use and rural and environmental protection priorities of the region.

Nanaimo has long served as the focus for higher concentrations and more intensive commercial, professional, and service uses in the Regional District. Nanaimo contains the largest concentrations of employees in the area at sites including Downtown Nanaimo, Nanaimo Regional Hospital, and Vancouver Island University. Existing urban nodes, such as Woodgrove, are also economic generators that provide a range of goods and services to residents from Nanaimo and the surrounding area. A strong economy and the locational characteristics of Nanaimo keep it well poised to experience greater growth over the next 20 to 25 years.

This Plan supports working with the RDN and member municipalities on creating opportunities and enhancing existing development to promote a 'vibrant and sustainable economy'. The mix of uses supported in the urban nodes and corridors reflect the policies developed in Goal 7 of the RGS by providing a variety of employment opportunities in close proximity to housing and other services. These nodes and corridors, along with the industrial, commercial and resource lands, are intended to expand the range of options to live, work, and be in Nanaimo.

RGS Goal 8 Food Security

To protect and enhance the capacity of the region to produce and process food.

In support of Goal 8 of the RGS, planNanaimo recognizes the importance of food security and providing access to local, healthy food. This involves consideration of where food is being grown, how it is processed and distributed, and ultimately how waste reduction and recovery is managed. planNanaimo contains specific objectives and policies to develop sustainable local food systems, to encourage partnerships for food security, and to ensure access to food. The development of a food charter and food system strategy is specifically addressed to help develop sustainable local food systems and encourage partnerships for food security.

Education is promoted as a key component of food security, while other policies encourage the use of lands throughout the city for urban agriculture, and ensure the Agricultural Land Commission is supported in its mandate to protect agricultural lands.

RGS Goal 9 Pride of Place

To celebrate the unique beauty, culture, history and arts of the region.

planNanaimo speaks to the importance of social enrichment, ensuring a healthy community through the recognition and importance of place, character, history and culture. Cultural development is considered to be of great importance to the community's unique flavour and is recognized through the recognition and protection of heritage resources, and continued investment and development of local arts and culture programs.

Built form also factors into the community's pride of place, and quality development is encouraged through development permits and design guidelines that highlight green buildings, sustainable landscape features, and good quality architectural design that emphasizes neighbourhood character.

RGS Goal 10 Efficient Services

To provide efficient, cost effective services and infrastructure.

planNanaimo supports Goal 10 of the RGS through a number of policies. New community services shall only be provided to lands within the UCB. This, along with refined development patterns, will serve to focus growth and lead to greater efficiencies in the provision of services, including water, storm, energy, and emergency planning. Servicing is currently in place or available to meet Nanaimo's anticipated growth over the next 20 to 25 years.

RGS Goal 11 Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

To facilitate an understanding of, and commitment to, the goals of growth management among all levels of government, the public, and key private and voluntary sector partners.

This Plan supports full collaboration at the local level among Council, citizens, the business community, stakeholders and special interest groups in establishing the design, character, and uses on lands within the Urban Nodes, Corridors, and Neighbourhood and other land use designations of planNanaimo.

Ongoing consultation with the public and other interested parties will continue through regularly scheduled Council meetings, involvement of the Nanaimo Advisory Planning Committee on the review of amendment applications, public information meetings, public hearings, and expansion of the City's website.

planNanaimo supports ongoing efforts to work with the Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville, District of Lantzville and the RDN in creating and implementing a shared future for the mid Island area. In addition, this Plan supports efforts to work with the Snuneymuxw First Nation on achieving shared goals and objectives.

Overall, all policies of planNanaimo are fully consistent with the RGS.

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3.3 Implementation of the Regional Context Statement

Any future changes to planNanaimo will follow the fundamental principles of the Regional Growth Strategy. The City will uphold the fundamental principles of the Regional Growth Strategy, including:

- **Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption** through continued efforts and opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve green design standards
- **Protect the Environment** by implementing policies and Development Permit Area guidelines that provide enhanced protection for the sensitive lands and waterways
- **Coordinate Land Use and Mobility** through diversifying options for traveling in and around Nanaimo
- **Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Rural Village and Urban Growth Centres** by maintaining the UCB and encouraging mixed use development and a range of housing options
- **Enhance Rural Integrity** by limiting urban impacts on rural and resource lands
- **Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing** through new and existing housing stock
- **Enhance Economic Resiliency** through focused development and a positive approach to growth
- **Enhance Food Security** by supporting the protection of agricultural lands and promoting food security and urban agriculture
- **Celebrate Pride of Place** through the recognition and protection of cultural, heritage and built form resources
- **Provide Services Efficiently** by encouraging infill and the effective use of infrastructure
- **Enhance Cooperation Among Jurisdictions** by working together to promote shared goals and visions for the area