

DATE OF MEETING JULY 15, 2019

AUTHORED BY BILL CORSAN, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT **DOWNTOWN NANAIMO INFORMATION SESSION**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide Council with background information relating to the Downtown Nanaimo Information Session.

## **BACKGROUND**

Downtown Nanaimo is the heart of the city. The downtown provides a variety of retail shops, a range of housing opportunities, professional offices and services, and the majority of cultural attractions in the city. The downtown is a transportation hub providing vital connections to Vancouver and neighbouring communities as well as being the focal point of the city's transit and road network. Along with a spectacular waterfront walkway and large civic park, the downtown serves as the community's gathering space for events and festivals. The downtown is the historical, cultural, professional, and business centre of Nanaimo.

The downtown core is also an area with a concentration of social services and has in recent years seen an increase in homelessness and social issues.

Downtown has been a focal point by previous Council's who have made investments in facilities and infrastructure. Development is encouraged through a number of policy documents, including the Official Community Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, and the Nanaimo Downtown Plan Urban Design Guidelines. Incentives such as the Hotel Revitalization Tax Exemption Program and the Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption Program have been put in place to entice investment.

The *2019-2022 Strategic Plan* recognizes the importance of downtown by prioritizing a number of initiatives, such as the Downtown Mobility Hub, investments at 1 Port Drive, and advocacy for the passenger ferry service to downtown Vancouver.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff have arranged a meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) to focus a discussion around the downtown core.

Attachment A contains a set of Poster Information Boards that outline current initiatives and projects that are underway in the downtown core.

During the GPC meeting, Council will be invited to explore the existing issues facing the downtown. Staff will be on hand to answer questions about current programs. The discussion will then focus on identifying priorities, actions, and opportunities for the downtown moving forward. The session will be graphically recorded, leaving a visual record for further discussion.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Downtown Nanaimo is the heart of the city, and contains residential, commercial, recreational, and cultural land uses. The downtown is also the transportation hub for the region.
- Previous Councils have set policy and made investments in the downtown core to encourage revitalization.
- Staff have provided a series of poster boards outlining the breadth of activity underway in the downtown core.
- Council has an opportunity during the GPC meeting to discuss issues, identify priorities, actions, and opportunities for downtown Nanaimo.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Poster Information Boards |

#### **Submitted by:**

Bill Corsan  
Director of Community Development |

#### **Concurrence by:**

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager of Development Services

Bill Sims  
General Manager of Engineering and Public Works

Richard Harding  
General Manager of Parks, Recreation and Culture |