

DATE OF MEETING September 9, 2019

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SUBJECT **2020 STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with a proposed outline of the City's strategic policy development process for 2020.

### **Recommendation**

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend Council endorse the draft work plan and guiding principles for the 2020 strategic policy development process:

- a. Build on successful policies in existing documents;
- b. Incorporate Council's strategic themes identified in the Strategic Plan: Environmental Responsibility, Governance Excellence, Livability, and Economic Health;
- c. Acknowledge and address the priorities of climate change, reconciliation, and sustainable service delivery;
- d. Include robust community engagement in the creation of plans and strategies; and
- e. Provide a clear and coordinated vision to guide community-building for the next 25 years.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Nanaimo has a range of long-term policy documents that guide the future development of the city, including the effective management of assets to maintain efficient service provision. These strategic documents collectively act as a framework to plan for and respond to the dynamic pressures of changing population and related economic, social, and environmental conditions.

In the past 20 years, the City has seen considerable population growth, which has driven the need for expanded municipal services and public amenities, resulting in changing patterns of land use. Evolving external factors, such as climate change, have a significant impact on the future operations of the City, as do changing social issues associated with homelessness and the need for affordable housing. At the same time, relationships with other levels of government, including First Nations and School Districts, continue to be strengthened, providing new opportunities for partnerships that shape community growth.

There are several key policy documents that merit an immediate review. This includes the Official Community Plan (OCP) that sets the overall framework for the City's approach to land use and community development, and influences the direction of multiple other policy documents. There is also a need to ensure that the work of more recently-completed planning processes (including Council's 2020 Strategic Plan) are incorporated into existing documents. Subsequently, Staff have identified an opportunity to develop a coordinated approach to

synchronize these strategic policy documents by initially focussing on three key strategic documents scheduled to be reviewed during 2019/2021:

- The Official Community Plan
- Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan
- Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan

Additionally, the Community Sustainability Action Plan, Economic Development Strategy, and the Water Supply Strategic Plan are also scheduled to be reviewed in 2020. The review and development of each document will be included in the strategic policy review process to ensure coordination and coherence with the Council's Strategic Plan, the OCP, and the other updated policy documents.

Each strategic policy document is discussed below:

### **Official Community Plan**

The City of Nanaimo adopted the current OCP, "planNanaimo", in 2008. planNanaimo built on the policies developed in the previous community planning processes to promote the following city-wide goals:

1. Manage Urban Growth
2. Build a More Sustainable Community
3. Encourage Social Enrichment
4. Promote a Thriving Economy
5. Protect and Enhance The Environment
6. Improve Mobility and Servicing
7. Work Towards a Sustainable Nanaimo

The document lists *sustainability* as the community's guiding principle, which is reflected in the implementation strategy included in the document. The City has completed many of the actions listed in the implementation strategy, and in keeping with best practices, there is a need to review the OCP. This would involve evaluating how effective the current policies have been and determine if policy changes are needed to reflect changing conditions and priorities.

Staff propose the 2020 OCP update would continue to build on the policies of planNanaimo, and focus on the following:

1. Update the OCP to include the significant policy documents created since 2008 (e.g., Transportation Master Plan, and Affordable Housing Strategy)
2. Fill information gaps with data generated through updated population models, land capacity analyses, and needs assessments
3. Evaluate existing policies and practices (e.g., land use designations for nodes, corridors, and neighbourhoods, steep-slope development permit area guidelines)
4. Include new priorities into the City's strategic policy fabric (e.g., Council's 2020 Strategic Plan, Truth and Reconciliation, climate change, and asset management)
5. Implement and monitor progress towards the new and updated policy objectives

## **Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan**

The existing Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan was developed in 2005. The existing plan includes directives related to recreation and culture facility development, service delivery methods and parks and open space management, including recommendations for sub plans to be developed in support of the master plan. Over the past 14 years, the majority of the plan directives have been addressed.

Additionally, the City adopted the Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo in 2014. The goals of the Cultural Plan include: strengthening the creative sector and the creative economy; connecting people, communities, and ideas; and focusing on our cultural spaces and places. Elements of the cultural plan will be updated through the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

There are opportunities to modernize the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan by developing renewed plan directives to guide departmental initiatives over the next ten years. Since 2005, community needs have shifted, urban development patterns have changed, over 400ha of new parkland has been acquired, new trends in recreation management have arisen, and initiatives to support climate change adaptation and environmental conservation have progressed. Undertaking a parks, recreation, culture, and facilities master plan review at this time will clarify priorities going forward and ensure alignment with other strategic planning documents slated for review.

## **Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan**

The City prepared the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan in 2014. The master plan recommended the City's growth be managed by supporting a shift from automobile to sustainable modes of transportation, including walking, cycling and transit, collectively referred to as active transportation.

Since 2014, the City identified the need to focus on implementing active transportation policy and create the Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan (the "Transportation Plan"). The Transportation Plan will measure active transportation usage; confirm the wants and needs of the community for walking, cycling, and transit connections; and formulate an implementation strategy. Coordinating the development of the Transportation Plan with the Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan and the Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo will help the City to integrate mobility networks with parks and recreation facilities, and identify creative opportunities for public realm enhancements.

The Transportation Plan will also include a strategy to support mobility for people of all ages and abilities as the city transitions from its current transportation network to a future network fostering active transportation. Additionally, the Transportation Plan will include a component of public education to provide residents with tools to age in place, offsetting the need for significant capital infrastructure investments.

## **Community Sustainability Action Plan**

The City developed the Community Sustainability Action Plan in 2012 to address climate change by focusing on land use and transportation, buildings, energy systems, and solid waste. Since the City developed the Action Plan, the global awareness and understanding of climate

change has increased significantly. To reflect the urgency of the issue, Council declared a climate emergency in 2019.

By updating the Sustainability Plan, the City has an opportunity to review its commitments to climate change generally, and specifically to reflect the target goals of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change limiting global warming to 1.5C.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

Economic Health is one of the key pillars in the City's strategic plan. Economic development is the process of "creating wealth" through the mobilization of financial, physical, human and natural resources to improve the tax base and the quality of life in an area. It is about creating a vibrant, resilient, and sustainable local economy that is inclusive of all persons that live, work, do business in, or receive services from our city.

The City completed Nanaimo's current Economic Development Strategy and Investment Readiness Assessment inventory in 2011. The strategy identified four key objectives and various action items to increase Nanaimo's competitiveness and prosperity. This strategy is now eight years old, and the economic landscape both locally and globally has changed significantly.

City Council has expressed an interest in increasing economic development resources and recently committed to developing a new Economic Development Strategy in partnership with a number of non-profit partners in the community, such as Community Futures, Chamber of Commerce, Innovation Island, and the Mid-Island Business Initiative.

Defining an economic development vision and specific goals that align with the City's strategic priorities is vital for informing economic development work plans for the next five years. An economic development strategy will help guide the collective efforts of the City, local organizations, businesses, and citizens to build a stronger local economy. The Strategy will ensure efficient and effective use of resources and help reduce duplication with partners.

### **Water Supply Strategic Plan**

Nanaimo's 2007 Water Supply Strategic Plan provides a 50-year vision for the city's drinking water. Aligning with the Official Community Plan's vision of viability, environmental protection and sustainable management, the Strategic Plan espouses three fundamental goals:

1. Provide safe drinking water
2. Ensure a sustainable water supply
3. Provide cost-effective water delivery

Major cornerstones of the Water Supply Strategic Plan include:

- Begin planning for a water treatment plant in response to evolving regulations
- Begin planning to augment the supply (build a new dam) to be ready for 2020
- Continue building out a capital plan to ensure long-term viability and robustness of the supply
- Recognize water as a shared resource, including the environment and other communities

Since 2007, the City constructed over \$100 million in water supply infrastructure, including the flagship water treatment plant, reservoirs, pipe lines, and pump stations. The system is poised to serve the community for the coming decades.

Notably, the city now consumes the same amount of water annually as it did in the mid-1990s, despite population growth of 25,000. Reduced water consumption has delayed the need to construct a \$100M dam by at least a decade and a half; however, climate change is accelerating the need for expanding the city's water supply.

With a focus on sustainable service delivery, the City's water supply system continues to be robust; drinking water is managed through strategic and long-term planning. It deserves continued careful management and attention by the entire community. Including the Water Supply Strategic Plan in the 2020 strategic policy process will keep water resource management coherent across the organization, and drinking water prominent in the community.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Guiding Principles**

Staff have prepared a set of draft guiding principles to direct the strategic policy review process (Attachment A). The draft principles would apply to the overall strategic policy review process and the individual processes developed for each document. The draft guiding principles are listed below:

- Build on successful policies in existing documents;
- Incorporate Council's strategic themes identified in the Strategic Plan: Environmental Responsibility, Governance Excellence, Livability, and Economic Health
- Acknowledge and address the priorities of climate change, Truth and Reconciliation, and sustainable service delivery;
- Include robust community engagement in the creation of plans and strategies; and
- Provide a clear and coordinated vision to guide community-building for the next 25 years.

Staff will further develop the guiding principles in the first phase of the coordinated work plan and expect each policy document will have its own series of guiding principles.

### **Project Team**

The review of the strategic policies will be led by the City's senior leadership team. In addition, an interdepartmental team of project managers will meet regularly and throughout the process to ensure coordination and avoid duplication of process. The development of plans and strategies will follow the City's Project Management Framework.

Staff have already begun the policy review and development process. Activities completed or underway include meetings with interdepartmental Staff, requests for proposal for various consulting services (population projections, land capacity analysis, engagement and communications), and background policy review and research.

## Work Plan

Based on the review of corporate priorities and resources, Staff have drafted a work plan for the coordinated policy development process (Attachment B). The draft work plan forecasts the project to occur over the next 18 months following the general outline below:

Spring 2019	Starting: Research & Review
Spring 2020	Exploring: Issues & Opportunities
Summer 2020	Visioning: Options & Strategic Directions
Spring 2021	Drafting: Initial Plans & Strategies
Spring 2021	Reviewing: Final Plans & Strategies

Based on the development of previous strategic policy documents, Staff recognize the targeted timeline may need to be extended to accommodate unscheduled events and changes to the proposed work plan. The project team will evaluate the progress of the strategic policy process, and recommend changes to the work plan, if required.

## Coordinated Budgeting

By coordinating the development of the above-noted strategic documents, Staff expect to share resources and collaborate on the generation of background reports and consulting services, resulting in cost savings for the City. For example, Staff hired a consultant to provide a land capacity and analysis assessment after identifying the needs of Staff from the Community Development and Parks, Recreation, and Culture Departments. Staff expect the coordinated strategic policy review process to result in additional costs savings going forward.

## Public Engagement

Public engagement is key to developing effective strategic policy for the City. Robust public engagement will be a guiding principle for the strategic policy development process. The City will include the following in developing a program of public engagement:

- Hire an engagement consultant to help define and support the process;
- Develop an engagement strategy that would include the development of each strategic document;
- Coordinate public outreach;
- Create a process that is thoughtful, interesting, and effective; and
- Save resources and expedite the policy development process by linking departmental Staff and budgets.

Staff are issuing a request for proposal to hire an engagement consultant for the strategic policy development process. Additionally, Staff will hire a consultant to prepare branding and messaging resources to inform the strategic policy development process.

## Role for Council

Firstly, Staff will return with a report requesting Council authorize Staff to strike a task force to oversee the process to create the City's guiding documents: the OCP; the Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan; and the Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan. Staff will also request Council authorize steering committees to guide the development of other



individual strategic policy documents. The project team will determine which processes will require the direction of a steering committee.

Secondly, Staff will also return with a report requesting Council authorize a terms of reference for the overall strategic policy process and for the OCP; the Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan; and the Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan. Staff will also request Council authorize a terms of reference to guide the development of other individual strategic policy documents.

Thirdly, Staff will return with reports to Council to provide updates on the City's progress on the strategic policy development. Council can expect to receive a report when a specific milestone is reached in the development of a strategic policy process. Example milestones may include the completion of each stage of the draft work plan.

Finally, Staff will return with a report to Council requesting approval of the guiding and strategic documents drafted in the coordinated policy review process. |

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend Council endorse the draft work plan and guiding principles for the 2020 strategic policy development process:
  - f. Build on successful policies in existing documents;
  - g. Incorporate Council's strategic themes identified in the Strategic Plan: Environmental Responsibility, Governance Excellence, Livability, and Economic Health;
  - h. Acknowledge and address the priorities of climate change, reconciliation, and sustainable service delivery;
  - i. Include robust community engagement in the creation of plans and strategies; and
  - j. Provide a clear and coordinated vision to guide community-building for the next 25 years.
    - The advantages of this option: An endorsed work plan and guiding principles would provide Staff and the community with an understanding of the proposed 2020 strategic policy development process.
    - The disadvantages of this option: None identified.
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide Staff with alternative direction.
  - The advantages of this option: The GPC could recommend Council consider alternative guiding principles to inform the strategic policy development process.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Staff would be required to amend the principles, which may impact the strategic policy development process. |

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Several strategic policy documents are due for review in 2020.
- Staff identified an opportunity to coordinate the review and development of three guiding documents: the OCP, the Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities Master Plan, and the Active and Sustainable Transportation Plan.
- Additionally, Staff propose to update the Community Sustainability Action Plan, Economic Development Strategy, and the Water Supply Strategic Plan in the strategic policy development process.
- Staff propose the GPC recommend Council adopt the guiding principles for the strategic policy development process.
- The proposed work plan would occur over approximately 24 months: Spring 2019 to Spring 2021.
- Council would provide ongoing input into the strategic development process by appointing members to a strategic policy development task force and project-based steering committees, approving terms of reference to inform the overall and individual work plans, reviewing progress towards regular milestones, and approving the final strategic policy documents.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: Guiding Principles

ATTACHMENT B: Draft Work Plan |

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