

DATE OF MEETING November 04, 2020

AUTHORED BY ROB LAWRENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER

SUBJECT REIMAGINE NANAIMO ENVIRONMENTAL GAP ANALYSIS REVIEW

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Environment Committee with the opportunity to comment and provide input on the REIMAGINE Nanaimo Environmental 'Technical Backgrounders'.

BACKGROUND

The REIMAGINE Nanaimo process involves a comprehensive planning policy review and update of key strategic planning policy documents for the City. Central to this is an update of the City's 2008 Official Community Plan (OCP), the 2005 Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan, and the creation of the City's first Active Transportation Plan.

The process includes public engagement for these plans as part of a broader process that involves the review of other key strategic plans, such as, the Economic Development Strategy, Water Supply Strategic Plan, and the Sustainability Action Plan (Climate Action Plan).

By combining the review and update of these policy documents, the City can maximize opportunities for community participation and engagement on these interrelated policy documents. This approach ensures consistency between the plans and prevents public confusion and potential engagement fatigue from multiple overlapping processes.

At the 2020-OCT-07 Special Environment Committee meeting, draft 'Technical Backgrounders' were distributed to the committee members, focussing on the following topic areas:

- Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Mitigation;
- Climate and Hazard Adaptation; and,
- Green Infrastructure/Natural Environment.

The 'Technical Backgrounders' are a more detailed compliment to the more general 'Public Backgrounders' that are on the REIMAGINE Nanaimo website currently. The main purpose of these documents are to use them with professional Staff and technical stakeholder audiences to summarize Nanaimo's recent progress on a range of environmental priorities and compare that to what other leading jurisdictions have done, with a focus on the Pacific Northwest and jurisdictions with similar goals and objectives.

By identifying policy and program 'gaps' between the City and similar communities in the Pacific Northwest, the intention is to identify policies and actions that can be considered for Phase 2, (exploring options) of REIMAGINE Nanaimo.

DISCUSSION

The following is a list of the policy gaps and program options summarized from the “Potential Next Steps” identified in the Environmental Technical Backgrounders and in the LANARC/C2MP Climate/Environmental Gap Analysis PowerPoint presentation that were presented during the Special Environment Committee meeting on 2020-OCT-07.

Climate and Hazard Adaptation Backgrounder

- Development Permit Area for coastal zone/hazard areas.
- More education/awareness on building along marine shoreline.
- Study long-term public infrastructure needs for hazard areas.
- Review and update water conservation information for the City, (working with the Regional District of Nanaimo).
- Create an urban heat island mitigation development permit checklist.
- Continue urban forest planting incentive programs.
- Implement FireSmart best practices, (within priority neighbourhood and parks).

GHG Mitigation Backgrounder

- Existing building retrofits (target oil heat conversion and promote zero emission alternatives).
- New construction (increase pace of Step Code Implementation/promote zero emission alternatives/offer density bonusing for zero carbon buildings).
- Improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure, targeting infrastructure expensive to upgrade (i.e. level 3 chargers).
- Improve organic waste diversion.
- Increase active transportation infrastructure within nodes and corridors.
- Investigate E-bike infrastructure needs.

Green Infrastructure / Natural Areas Backgrounder

- Establish stormwater utility to incentivize changes.
- Review densification options within lower density zones.
- Move towards regulations for developments above an impervious threshold.
- Update the erosion and sediment control bylaw:
 - Update best practice and education for builders.
 - Review enforcement and ticketing options.
- Restart rainwater management planning for storm catchment areas.
- Build on riparian/ecological restoration partnerships.
- Promote homeowner ‘naturescape’ program for residential habitat creation.
- Review and update Invasive Plant Management Strategy.
- Scale-up community volunteer/low barrier employment program for invasive management and ecological restoration on City lands.
- Review and update noxious weed control bylaw.
- Review and update Urban Forest Management Strategy.
- Complete a City Biodiversity Strategy.

CONCLUSION

This report provides an initial list of policy gaps and program actions that are intended to be used in further consultation under the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process.

Committee members will be asked to review the list and:

- Confirm if the backgrounder topic areas are complete.
- Review the policy and program gaps identified in the backgrounders and confirm there are not other actions that should be added to the list.
- Prioritize the top three policy gap and program actions for each backgrounder; based on the information provided and considering overall impact. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The 'Technical Backgrounders' are a more detailed compliment to the more general 'Public Backgrounders' that are on the REIMAGINE Nanaimo website currently.
- The main purpose of these documents are to use them with professional Staff and technical stakeholder audiences to summarize Nanaimo's recent progress on a range of environmental priorities and compare that to what other leading jurisdictions have done, with a focus on the Pacific Northwest and jurisdictions with similar goals and objectives.
- By identifying policy and program 'gaps' between the City and similar communities in the Pacific Northwest, the intention is to identify policies and actions that can be considered for Phase 2, (exploring options) of REIMAGINE Nanaimo.

Submitted by:

Rob Lawrance
Environmental Planner |

Concurrence by:

Jeremy Holm
Director, Development Approvals

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services |