

City of Nanaimo
Economic Development
2021 Work Plan

January 2021



Introduction

The City of Nanaimo completed an Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) in January 2021. The purpose the Strategy is to provide a roadmap to strengthen the economic base of the region. The City of Nanaimo and its partners recognized the need to develop a new strategy that ensures the benefits of growth are shared and that there is opportunity for the entire community to participate in the economy. The Strategy has been prepared with the guiding principles of sustainable prosperity, collaboration and economic reconciliation with local First Nations.

This work plan is for 2021 and addresses both City and Agency roles. The Agency is projected to be up and operating in the second half of the year, which is reflected in the action items.

DRAFT

Agency Setup

Actions						
7.1 Economic Development Agency					Priority:	High
7.1.1 Setting up the agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Confirm the form of organization, name, ownership, governance, articles of incorporation, place of business and other legal necessities for the EcDev. b. Vest the Agency with a core budget sufficient to implement this strategy, based on a fee-for service agreement between the City and its partners for a minimum three-year term. The recommended budget for economic development as a whole is between \$0.75 million and \$1 million annually. c. To facilitate the involvement of partners in the Agency, link their annual contributions to specific programs or projects that they, as well as the City, have prioritized. 						
Timing	Q1-2	Resources	7 workdays	Lead/Partners	City	Class B Shareholders

Actions						
7.2 External and Internal Delivery					Priority:	High
7.2.1 Align delivery between City and Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare a policies and procedures manual, staffing plan, job descriptions and other documentation as necessary. b. Prepare an internal communications plan with the City that will establish objectives, means and timetable. The plan should incorporate shared planning, monitoring and reporting using the performance measurement model in this strategy. Quarterly meetings and reporting are strongly recommended. 						
Timing	Q1-2	Resources	20 workdays	Lead/Partners	City	Class B Shareholders

Actions						
7.3 Performance Measurement					Priority:	High
7.3.2 Annual Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare an annual report on the progress made in implementing the strategy, including reporting on the inputs, activities, outputs and actual and projected outcomes. The reference document is the Annual Work Plan. b. Prepare metrics and indicators on broader changes in economic conditions and key economic drivers, which will feed into decision-making and the development of an annual work plan for the following year. Examples of key indicators, most of which will be drawn from secondary sources, include the value of building permits, housing starts, major projects, regional employment and unemployment data, household income, business licensing, economic output, commercial and industrial vacancy rates, and education and training metrics. These data would be drawn from the reporting dashboard referenced in Strategy 4.1 and Strategy 6.2. 						
Timing	Q1-2	Resources	5 workdays	Lead/Partners	City	Class B Shareholders

1.0 Economic Capital

Actions						
1.3 Revitalizing the Downtown & Waterfront					Priority:	High
1.3.1 Continue to Invest in the Waterfront						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to work on the phased development of 1 Port Drive by supporting rezoning, subdivision and disposition of the property to create a signature waterfront development. b. Complete Investment Package for 1 Port Drive. c. Complete the feasibility study and functional design of development of the Departure Bay Waterfront Walkway d. Obtain approval of Electors for Departure Bay Walkway. e. Work with the Nanaimo Port Authority in redeveloping the properties along Stewart Ave (Newcastle Channel) to encourage the development of the waterfront walkway and investment in new marina, office and tourism development. 						
Timing	Q3-4	Resources	20 workdays	Lead/Partners	City	NPA, SFN

1.3 Revitalizing the Downtown & Waterfront					Priority:	High
1.3.2 Leverage investor interest in downtown development						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include downtown property owners in the BRE program to better understand the development goals and challenges for their properties. b. Continue to work with SFN and BC Parks on improved connectivity between the City and Satsutshun (Newcastle Island). c. Monitor properties for sale or rent and engage in direct recruitment of businesses that are a good fit for specific areas and retail/service gaps. d. Support reestablishment of the Commercial Street Night Market. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – meet with night market organizers and merchants to determine issues and barriers – monitor provincial COVID health guidelines – prepare physical distancing strategies – forecast potential start dates – conduct vendor outreach and recruitment 						
Timing	Q3-4	Resources	10 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency	NPA, SFN, Chamber

1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics					Priority:	High
1.4.1 Facilitate transportation connections						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with private sector interests that wish to establish a foot ferry passenger service. b. Lobby senior government for funding support of regional transportation infrastructure. c. Provide research to estimate demand and build business cases. d. 						
Timing	Q3-4	Resources	15 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency	NPA, SFN, Chamber

1.4 Transportation, Cargo and Logistics						Priority:	High
1.4.2 Transportation and logistics hub <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Commission a Transportation and Logistics Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – secure funding – develop terms of reference with partners – commission strategy b. Assist the Nanaimo Port Authority's efforts to develop international direct vessel calls and regional short sea shipping. c. Work with Nanaimo Airport to integrate air cargo logistics within the larger distribution/logistics network. 							
Timing	Q4	Resources	20 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency	NPA, NA, SFN, Chamber	

1.5 Robust Broadband Connectivity						Priority:	High
1.5.1 City policy and planning support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include broadband and technology infrastructure in the new OCP's objectives and policy statements to underline their importance to all aspects of community and economic development. b. Review municipal access agreement policies and revise as necessary to make it easier, faster, and cheaper for facilities-based telecom service providers to deploy fiber-optic infrastructure. 							
Timing	Q2-3	Resources	12 workdays	Lead/Partners	City	NPA, SFN, VIU	

1.5 Robust Broadband Connectivity						Priority:	High
1.5.2 Work with existing broadband initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support VIU's high speed Wi-Fi initiative for campus and explore opportunities for broadening service to include the Downtown, Harewood and Snuneymuxw Reserve. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develop a spatial and temporal plan for potential build out of services, identifying key hot spots and points of service – work with partners on phased implementation – look for opportunities to leverage service with the Connected Coast fibre initiative (see below) b. Work with the Connected Coast initiative to identify opportunities for linking their network to Nanaimo. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reach out to project leads CityWest and Strathcona RD (SRD) for update on project status – ensure the Agency/City remains a major point of contact for all future communications – act as a liaison with area residents, First Nations and stakeholders to determine needs, opportunities and areas of environmental concern or sensitivities – identify local ISPs and anchor institutions that are interested in upgrading their local networks to allow for last-mile connections to the infrastructure – work with CityWest and SRD on Nanaimo's suggested landing sites in Nanaimo – develop a coordinated access, permitting and regulatory plan to facilitate construction of the approved backbone infrastructure once it is ready to begin. 							

1.5.3 Move toward a gigabyte city

- a. Establish a Nanaimo Broadband Task Force to build a community-wide movement toward a Gigabyte City.
 - prepare a terms of reference and term for the Task Force
 - identify and recruit Task Force members
 - the Agency should provide assistance to the Task Force to begin developing a long-term strategy for Nanaimo as a gigabyte city – to be completed in 2022.
- b. Research a business case to build, own and operate a municipal broadband utility to service the Downtown, Hospital and University districts, i.e., a community fibre initiative.
 - conduct scoping research on a municipal broadband utility, identifying a clear rationale for how this approach provides solutions and opportunities that is not being met by existing ISPs
 - a focus on providing equality of access and removing any digital divide in Nanaimo should be targeted
 - prepare a business case outline and allocate research resources to complete the case in 2022

Timing	Q4	Resources	16 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency, City	NPA, NA, SFN, VIU, NRGH, Strathcona RD, Nanaimo RD
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1.6 Urban Tourism Product

Priority: Flex

1.6.1 Committing resources to product and destination development

- a. Re-evaluate existing City contracts for tourism services and shift spending priorities to product and destination development, as well as visitor services.
- b. The Agency and City should write a policy or policies as needed that clarifies how they partner with the tourism industry on tourism initiatives.
 - the Agency and City should focus their efforts on product and destination development, working with operators to create more experiences and building local infrastructure that serves visitors as well as residents
 - the Agency and City should not undertake or contribute to tourism marketing, recognizing that local accommodators are obliged to collectively market Nanaimo through the Municipal and Regional District Tax
 - this notwithstanding, the policy or policies should allow the Agency and City to participate in marketing initiatives from time to time where it clearly contributes to broader community benefits

1.6.2 Product development downtown

- a. Deliver a hospitality excellence program to enhance the downtown-waterfront tourism precinct.
 - work with Destination BC and local training providers to deliver WorldHost and other training programs targeted at downtown experiences and better visitor services
 - work with Tourism Association of Vancouver Island to recruit and deliver a program
- b. Structure a tourism offering around the downtown and waterfront, working with hospitality operators to draw visitors off the ferries and highways.
 - work with the Chamber and Nanaimo Hospitality Association to identify a concept, theme and branding around a downtown visitor offer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – focus on creating signature tourism events, especially in the off season that will increase activity and foot traffic between destination facilities such as the convention centre and the Port Theatre. <p>c. Encourage showcase spaces for arts, culture and food that can animate downtown foot traffic and pedestrian ambiance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work with Chamber and downtown merchants to identify unused and underutilized storefronts and public spaces for potential pop-up activities and events <p>d. Enhance and promote access to and use of trails, greenways and parks that connect the downtown and waterfront, so visitors have opportunities to explore more of the city on foot or cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work with Recreation and Parks staff, NHA and Tourism providers to promote visitor awareness of and access to the City's parks, trails and greenways – scope out production of hardcopy and digital maps, including a map app, that can be distributed to visitors—actual production would be in 2022 						
Timing	Q4	Resources	16 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency, City	NHA, Chamber, Destination BC

1.7 Health Care Centre of Excellence						Priority: Moderate
<p>1.7.1 Supporting health care initiatives</p> <p>a. Advocate for new health care activities and services at NRGH that meet the service standards of similar communities in the province.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – meet with NRGH to identify where the Agency can best serve the case – provide research and support as needed <p>b. Support NRGH's efforts to become a tertiary hospital and establish a cancer centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provide research and support as needed 						
Timing	Q3-4	Resources	8 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency	NRGH, Island Health

3.0 Social Capital

Actions						
3.2 Nanaimo Health and Housing						Priority: Moderate
3.2.1 Providing support to health and housing initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with the Council of Champions and the Social Planning Organization on community economic development initiatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – support development of a poverty reduction strategy by focusing on economic solutions such as social purpose and social enterprise support – support planning around a Social Innovation Fund b. Work with BC Housing to secure 250+ new units of supportive housing in 2021/2022. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – provide research support on development incentives – assist with data management and information systems – develop metrics for tracking and reporting on affordable housing; include affordable housing metrics on website dashboard reporting – assist with Community Investment Campaign c. Participate in partnerships envisioned in the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy (CitySpaces 2018). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – support city-led land acquisition and development – foster partnerships between non-profit agencies and private sector developers interested in affordable homeownership – explore incentives for increased affordable homeownership 						
Timing	Q2-4	Resources	8 workdays	Lead/Partners	City, Agency	BC Housing, Island Health, Non Profits
3.4 Indigenous Economic Reconciliation						Priority: Moderate
3.4.1 Increasing the dialogue and generating options for reconciliation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Stz'uminus First Nations to build support for strategy implementation and identify areas of joint action. b. Work with the Chamber and SFN on the development of an Indigenomics Program within the City of Nanaimo to help local first Nations take a seat at the economic table. 						
Timing	Q4	Resources	10 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency, City	First Nations, Chamber

4.0 Business Development

Actions					
4.3 Positive Business Climate					Priority: Moderate
<p>4.3.1 Streamline Development Approvals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore the viability of on-line services to foster a more timely and efficient development process. Many communities have moved in this direction, for example through e-permits, to streamline processes, ensure transparency and improve processing times. b. Help to develop and implement solutions for current planning, subdivision and building permit processes which will significantly reduce development approval timelines. <p>4.3.2 Consider the provision of concierge services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a concierge service to support businesses navigating the development and building processes. A single point of contact as a developer moves through these processes can enhance service levels and lower costs. b. Provide periodic educational workshops targeting at realtors, commercial and industrial property owners, and developers to highlight zoning and development activities and updates on current permitting and approval processes. This educational process could also be used to support education on use of on-line services. 					
Timing	Q2-4	Resources	20 workdays	Lead/Partners	City
					Development Community

5.0 Technology and Innovation

Actions					
5.1 Connecting the Tech Sector					Priority: Flex
5.1.1 Develop a downtown tech hub <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote development of a downtown hub involving the tech sector and complementary sectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – coordinate tech hub efforts with broadband initiatives – work with landlords to recruit tech companies downtown – prepare a set of basic guidelines for creating a space that will attract innovators, promote to landlords and prepare supportive regulations and incentives – scope out a worker attraction and digital nomad program for implementation in 2022 					
5.1.2 Networking with the tech sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support development of a central directory of tech companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develop a database of tech companies – recruit one or two tech champions to scope out a directory in 2022-23 b. Sponsor and host networking events to increase interaction between tech companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – work with the tech champions recruited for the directory initiative and pilot a networking event in late 2021 – evaluate and refine into an ongoing series in 2022 					
Timing	Q4	Resources	20 workdays	Lead/Partners	Agency, City Tech Sector, Chamber

Summary

Priority	Number of Initiatives	Cumulative Time Commitment in Workdays	
		City	Agency
High	Nine (9)	64	66
Moderate	Four (4)	30	22
Flex	Two (2)	18	18
Admin.		15	20
Orientation		3	6
Total	Fifteen (15)	130	132

Maximum recommended time commitment: Typical work year would consist of 225 workdays.

High: top priority for implementation in 2021

Medium: second-order priority, suitable for implementation if resources and time allow and partners motivated

Flex: third-order priority, best suited for partial implementation if resources and time allow, but can be deferred