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SUBJECT MOBILITY UPDATE FOR REIMAGINE NANAIMO

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on overall mobility planning and policy development as we embark on Phase 2 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO, and spark discussion to help guide the next steps of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.

BACKGROUND

Under the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process, this report provides information and presents ideas for consideration through the lens of mobility. This report and presentation are intended to apprise Council of the work that has been completed and offer questions to engage in discussion, to support development of land use and mobility servicing scenarios through Phase 2 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO. The intent is to have an iterative dialogue around all modes of travel and how they will integrate into land use scenarios.

When the process of reviewing mobility policies began with REIMAGINE NANAIMO, the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan (NTMP), and its visions, goals, and strategies were still valid and applicable. Rather than adjusting the goals, this current process focuses on investigating the strategies being employed to achieve them. Through the Phase I engagement process, aspects of mobility were identified under three of the community's goals:

- Health
- Connectivity
- Ecological Impact

Within these, three indicators were chosen to evaluate land use scenarios:

- Traffic Injury Rate
- Transportation by Mode
- Daily Trip Distance Travelled

DISCUSSION

This section provides background for each of the goals and Indicators along with discussion points that could be considered, as land use scenarios develop. Presenting this information in a GPC forum, should support a more dynamic discussion between Staff and Council which should ultimately enable Staff to more successfully support Council and the community in the next steps of REIMAGINE NANAIMO.

GOAL: Health – Indicator: Traffic Injury Rate

Safety is the highest and most universally accepted priority for all modes of transportation. It is the first of the six visions outlined in the NTMP and affects all modes of transportation. Through REIMAGINE NANAIMO, Staff propose to adopt a Vision Zero Policy statement. Vision Zero speaks to the goal of reducing motor vehicle related fatalities and severe injuries to Zero. In order to make this a meaningful statement, it is essential to include time-based goals in Nanaimo's policy documents.

Successful policy also requires an accompanying action plan. Staff do not envision developing the specific action plan through REIMAGINE NANAIMO, but instead, plan to create a toolkit and implementation strategy following the adoption of the new Official Community Plan and the Active Transportation Strategy.

Considerations for adopting a policy statement and providing direction to develop an implementation strategy:

- **Consider what elements of transportation safety the City controls? Examples are road design (complete streets), speed limits (through signage, not bylaw), and establishing priorities for enforcement.**
- **Consider what elements the City does not control? (Provincial legislation, judicial system, or driver education.)**

GOAL: Connectivity and Ecological - Indicators: Transportation by Mode and Daily Trip Distance Travelled

Walking:

The NTMP envisions a near doubling of walking trips. It is important to create a system that makes walking a desirable option. Pedestrian mobility and thoughtful land use planning go hand in hand. Locating residential use close to employment and recreational services is paramount as more people will choose to walk if the distances are short. Typically, the maximum walking distance is 600-800m, or 10 to 13 minutes of walking.

When land use is well planned, daily travel distance is shorter. To support walking, the next priority is a walking network that is direct, comfortable and safe. New developments are obliged to build transportation infrastructure to current design standards. These standards have changed over the years, and some areas of the City were developed with little consideration for walking. The City has historically approached intersection (crosswalk) and corridor (sidewalk) upgrades through a reactive process. There is a technical process for evaluating and prioritizing requests from residents as to which areas are not currently meeting expectations. This process

has enabled bridging gaps in the network, but has inhibited efforts to establish a strategic and systematic effort to achieve walkable communities.

As part of the data collection and baseline information gathering, a review of the City's prioritization processes shows that the system being used is complex, but is consistent with peer communities such as Vancouver and Kelowna, BC, Bellingham, WA, and Boulder, CO. The emerging recommendations are to streamline the process to make it more universally understood, transparent, and to create guidelines or policy for the proactive prioritization of locations that serve direct connections, and where conflicts are known or suspected to occur. Land use scenarios will need to be confirmed before this process can take place.

Considerations when discussing land use and mobility servicing scenarios with aspirations to encourage and empower walking:

- **When planning investments in walking infrastructure, consideration will need to be made for balancing priorities. Ex. Determining weighting factors for safety vs economic equity?**
- **If a diffuse land use scenario is being considered, what level of service will be expected, how will that be resourced?**
- **How should Staff balance proactive walking investments against reactive requests?**

Biking:

The NTMP states the current goal for biking mode share is an increase by a factor of 5, raising it from 1% to 4% by 2041. Biking is an economical, healthy, sustainable and fun way to travel moderate distances. Commuters will typically ride up to 5km / trip). The most common challenges cyclists identify are:

- Consistency of facilities
- Lack of end of trip facilities (secure storage, etc).

The City's newly adopted Complete Streets Road Standard is foundational in providing design standards that support All Ages and Abilities of rider; however, implementing these standards on a City wide basis exceeds current resource capacities.

As land use scenarios evolve, Transportation and Parks Planning Staff will use existing usage data as well as feedback from the community to develop a network of primary, secondary, and tertiary biking, and multi-use routes connecting residents to their destinations. This information will then be cast into a prioritization policy for future implementation.

Considerations when discussing land use and mobility servicing scenarios with aspirations to encourage and empower biking:

- **How can existing cycling networks support potential land use scenarios?**
- **Can every neighbourhood be connected for cycling?**
- **What level of service for maintenance will be expected or can be provided for each level of hierarchy or route?**

Transit:

The current Official Community Plan aims to make transit a more economical, convenient and practical means to move around the City, but also acknowledges that changing mobility patterns will only come about with increased densities in Urban Nodes along corridors within neighbourhoods. The current plan does not distinguish transit's dual roles to:

- Provide basic mobility for people without transportation alternatives (service coverage), and
- Attract demand that would otherwise drive (ridership).

As land uses scenarios evolve through Phase 2, this vision will need to be adapted.

Of the various modes of travel within Nanaimo, transit is the one that the City has the least influence over. The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is the local government operator of the transit service, working alongside funding partner, BC Transit. Fortunately, the City and RDN have a strong working relationship and between the Transit Future Plan and the NTMP, the agencies are already aligned in their goals. The City and RDN have partnered to deliver the Transit Redevelopment Strategy concurrent to REIMAGINE NANAIMO, ensuring that transit will be part of forming a holistic land use and mobility strategy. The Transit Redevelopment Strategy has not progressed as far as REIMAGINE NANAIMO, but the collaboration between agencies and sharing of information will ensure that both processes support the needs of the community.

Considerations when discussing land use and mobility servicing scenarios with aspirations to integrate transit:

- **How should transit service design and resources be allocated between service coverage and attracting ridership?**
- **What direct or indirect factors could the City consider to support transit?**
 - **Parking management strategies at high density employment centers?**
 - **Land use that favours employment in centres and nodes with higher density residential at nodes and along priority corridors.**
 - **Transit prioritization on major corridors?**

CONCLUSION

Through REIMAGINE NANAIMO and the variety of other background investigations, Staff are gaining a stronger understanding of what residents' aspirations are for Nanaimo. We are now at a juncture of developing scenarios on how best to meet these expectations within the City's means. The development of land use schemes and evaluating them against indicators will enable the teams involved to prepare a mobility servicing strategy.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Engagement and background data collection is complete.
- Indicators for assessing land use scenarios have been identified.
- Supplemental considerations have been identified for discussion and development of potential land use scenarios.
- Next step is to identify land use scenarios and model mobility servicing.

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