

DATE OF MEETING November 22, 2021

AUTHORED BY THE REIMAGINE TEAM

**SUBJECT REIMAGINE NANAIMO – PHASE 2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with an update on the REIMAGINE NANAIMO Coordinated Strategic Plan Review process and the Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary report.

## **BACKGROUND**

The REIMAGINE NANAIMO Coordinated Strategic Plan Review is a comprehensive update and integration of the City of Nanaimo's key strategic planning and policy documents. The output of this process will be a new City Plan that incorporates an updated Official Community Plan (OCP), an updated Climate Action Plan, an updated Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, a new Active Transportation Plan, and other supporting documents (e.g., the Economic Development Strategy). The City Plan will be accompanied by an Action Plan that outlines the projects and programs that will implement the City Plan over the next 10 to 25 years.

Phase 1 (Gathering Ideas) of public engagement for the REIMAGINE NANAIMO took place between July and December 2020, and the Governance and Priorities Committee received the Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary on 2021-FEB-08. Input from Phase 1 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO informed the concepts brought forward to the public for consideration during Phase 2 of REIMAGINE (Exploring Options). Some of the primary themes heard during Phase 1 included: Appreciation of Nanaimo's nature and access to the waterfront; high value for Nanaimo's parks and recreation facilities; concern about climate change and human impacts on the environment; support for policies and programs promoting diversity, inclusion and reconciliation; and concern about homelessness and other social challenges.

## **DISCUSSION**

Phase 2 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO launched on 2021-JUN-28 with the Foundations Feedback Form, a survey focussed on getting input on the Nanaimo Doughnut framework, goals, and indicators. Phase 2 expanded on 2021-JUL-13 with the launch of the Scenarios Review, which included both scenario workshops and an interactive survey tool. Hard copies of both surveys were made available upon request. Phase 2 closed on 2021-SEP-23, having received input from over 2,300 survey submissions and workshop participants. Additional outreach and public participation also came from non-traditional forms of engagement such as pop-ups in City parks and at local events, a series of videos on social media (including on a new REIMAGINE TikTok account), project promotion at the Beban vaccination clinic, and art kits in schools and libraries. A Summary of Phase 2 Engagement is accessible via a link in Attachment A.

In terms of feedback on the Nanaimo Foundations (Goals, Indicators and Targets), about three-quarters (74%) of the 476 participants believed the Nanaimo Doughnut is a good framework on which to base the City Plan. Each of the five goals received support from between 73% and 82% of respondents, with the 'Green Nanaimo' goal receiving the strongest support. While the majority of respondents expressed that the foundations are on the right track, many also provided ideas and comments to better tailor the indicators and targets to meet Nanaimo's objective. For more details, please refer to Section 3.1 of the Summary of Phase 2 Engagement and the summary of Phase 2 Engagement – Report Appendices, both accessed through Attachment A.

The Phase 2 engagement activity that elicited the most input was the Scenarios Survey, which used an interactive platform called MetroQuest. The survey allowed the 1,537 participants to explore the implications of three potential land use scenarios, rank their priorities, and place features such as parks or transit improvements to show their preferred project locations. There was also opportunity to submit comments on any aspect of the project. A summary of the input from the Scenario Surveys can be found in Section 3.2 of the Summary of Phase 2 Engagement and verbatim comments included in the Summary of Phase 2 Engagement – Report Appendices, accessed via Attachment A.

The Scenario workshops, both with the public and with government and partner stakeholder groups, were a rich source of information as the two-hour workshop format allowed for a much deeper exploration of the scenarios as well as interactive discussion (some government workshops were one hour based on time constraints). Eight public workshops were held during the evenings, weekends, and some mornings to accommodate a range of schedules. The format included videos explaining the Nanaimo foundations and the three scenarios using a digital board called Miro that allowed participants to express priorities by placing amenities on a map, and small group discussions of the scenarios in breakout 'Zoom Rooms'. 248 people participated in the scenario workshops, with an additional 84 youth engaged in special workshops or meetings. For details on input gathered, please see the Summary of Phase 2 Engagement Section 3.3, accessed through Attachment A.

To validate the input received during the public workshops, Staff coordinated with a consulting group that provides representative focus groups for market research. Two workshops were held with a total of 20 participants, all of whom were compensated to attend a scenarios workshop without knowing the topic in advance. Feedback from these participants, who were selected to represent a range of community members (e.g., age, employment status, renter vs. homeowner), was compared to the input from people who signed up for a workshop. Input from the representative workshops contained similar themes from the workshops with the public, with several participants expressing interest in participating in future City planning processes now that they had experienced what it was like.

## **CONCLUSION**

Phase 2 engagement differed from Phase 1 in that, rather than asking for broad ideas or priorities, the aim was to explore specific visions for Nanaimo's future development as a community. The second phase of engagement was in many ways the most complex, as the community was asked to evaluate competing land use scenarios, each with its own merits and drawbacks. The outcome of this process is the draft City Plan that will be reviewed as part of Phase 3 engagement, which will include a land use proposal that represents a blend of the

scenarios based on the feedback received. However, the City Plan will encompass much more than land use policy: The draft City Plan document will include the proposed vision for how we will improve Nanaimo’s connectivity, sustainability, equity, health, and prosperity. Collecting final input on the draft document will be the objective of the last phase of the project, Phase 3, which will begin in January 2022.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The REIMAGINE NANAIMO Coordinated Strategic Plan Review is a comprehensive update and integration of the City of Nanaimo’s key strategic planning and policy documents.
- Phase 2 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO ran from 2021-JUN-28 until 2021-SEP-23 and gathered input from over 2,300 survey or workshop participants on different scenarios for Nanaimo’s future development. The Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary provides a detailed account of the activities and inputs during Phase 2.
- The third and final phase 3 of REIMAGINE NANAIMO will begin in January 2022.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- ATTACHMENT A:
1. [Link to REIMAGINE NANAIMO Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary](#)
  2. [Link to REIMAGINE NANAIMO Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary - Report Appendices.](#)

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