

DATE OF MEETING February 23, 2022

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SUBJECT DRAFT CITY PLAN ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS POLICIES

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness (ACAI) about proposed accessibility and inclusiveness policies included within the draft City Plan and how this aligns with the Accessible British Columbia Act.

BACKGROUND

Since the fall of 2019, the City has been working towards a comprehensive update of a number of key strategic planning policy documents through the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process. This involves the creation of one comprehensive City Plan. The draft City Plan is intended to integrate and serve as the City's Official Community Plan, Parks Recreation and Wellness Plan, Truth and Reconciliation Plan, Transportation Plan, Active Mobility Plan, Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, and as will be discussed in this report, our Accessibility and Inclusion Plan.

The process for developing this draft plan includes elevating, updating, and reinforcing numerous social policies and actions including many raised by this Committee. Staff met with the ACAI several times in 2021 to present and discuss REIMAGINE Nanaimo, including most recently a workshop with members in December 2021.

The REIMAGINE Nanaimo process is now in Phase 3 of the project that involves creating a draft City Plan that reflects community and committee engagement from Phases 1 and 2 as well as technical research. Through this phase, high-level policy has been incorporated into a draft City Plan, which will replace or supersede a number of existing policy documents and provide more coordinated citywide policy direction. Actions related to achieving the different goals and policies will be included within a secondary Integrated Actions Plan document.

In addition to land use policy, the City Plan includes the following five goals:

1. Green Nanaimo—Resilient and Regenerative Ecosystems
2. Connected Nanaimo—Equitable Access and Mobility
3. Healthy Nanaimo—Community Well-being and Livability
4. Empowered Nanaimo--Reconciliation, Representation, and Inclusion
5. Prosperous Nanaimo—Thriving and Resilient Economy

While accessibility and inclusiveness directions are embedded throughout the draft City Plan, specific focus on these areas are included in the 'Empowered Nanaimo' policy section. |

DISCUSSION

Sections of the draft Empowered Nanaimo Goal that focus on accessibility and inclusiveness are provided for the ACAI Committee's review and information (Attachment A). This includes the following sections:

2. Equity & Inclusivity
3. Political Voice & Engagement
4. Access for All

Each section includes desired outcomes (objectives) and policies to help the City achieve these outcomes. While some policies are carried forward from existing City documents, others are new and intended to reflect emerging directions including what was heard through community, committee and stakeholder engagement.

ACCESSIBLE BC LEGISLATION

In order to support people with disabilities to meaningfully participate in their communities, the Province of BC passed the Accessible BC Act in the summer of 2021.

In order to meet the act requirements, municipalities now need to:

- Develop an accessibility plan and commitment statement
- Have a Committee with an accessibility focus and feedback mechanism
- Update the plan every 3 years and submit to the Province

Staff have met with the Accessibility Directorate and confirmed that the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process and resulting draft City Plan and associated Integrated Actions Plan will fulfill legislative requirements to serve as our accessibility plan.

NEXT STEPS

Public engagement on the draft City Plan policies is scheduled to launch 2022-FEB-28 with a closing date of 2022-APR-08. The ACAI Committee will receive the full draft City Plan document after Council has received it on 2022-FEB-28. Staff anticipate returning to ACAI as needed to continue discussion on the draft City Plan, and to discuss the proposed Integrated Actions Plan intended to align with and implement the accessibility and inclusion policies in City Plan.

Following the end of Phase 3 public engagement, Staff anticipate returning to Council with an engagement summary prior to presenting a final version of City Plan to Council for their consideration in May 2022 with proposed Bylaw adoption in July 2022. Following the adoption of the City Plan by bylaw, Council will have opportunity to confirm and endorse the associated Integrated Actions Plan to help implement the City Plan policy document.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The REIMAGINE Nanaimo process is now in Phase 3 of the project that involves creating a draft City Plan that reflects community and committee engagement from Phases 1 and 2 as well as technical research.
- While accessibility and inclusion directions are embedded throughout the draft City Plan, specific focus on accessibility, inclusion, and diversity policies are included in the 'Empowered Nanaimo' policy section.
- The City Plan document will integrate accessibility policies and actions and will meet the requirements of the Province's Accessible BC Act legislation for an Accessibility Plan.
- The draft policy sections covering accessibility and inclusion are now available for the ACAI Committee's information and review.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Draft City Plan Accessibility and Inclusiveness Policies

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