

DATE OF MEETING May 9, 2022

AUTHORED BY LISA BHOPALSINGH, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT **REIMAGINE NANAIMO – PHASE 3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee results of the **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** Phase 3 Public Engagement on the Draft *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined*.

## **BACKGROUND**

The **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** Coordinated Strategic Plan Review is nearing completion with the development a draft *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* (“City Plan”) during Phase 3. Public engagement has been central to this review process and the development of the City Plan.

Phase 1 (Gathering Ideas) of public engagement for **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** took place between July and December 2020. This initial phase was focused on sharing information and listening to the community’s ideas about Nanaimo’s future. The input received was used to build options and scenarios explored in Phase 2. Some of the primary themes heard 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 social challenges. The Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) received the Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary on 2021-FEB-08.

Phase 2 (Exploring Options) of public engagement took place between June and September 2021. Phase 2 focused on developing and exploring options for how the community can achieve its shared vision and evaluating how different scenarios could support the community’s goals. This information was used to develop draft directions for *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* during Phase 3. Some of the primary themes heard during Phase 2 included: support for using the Nanaimo Doughnut as a way of organizing how we plan for Nanaimo’s future, and for the five draft goals: A Green Nanaimo, A Connected Nanaimo, A Healthy Nanaimo, An Empowered Nanaimo, and A Prosperous Nanaimo. There was also important feedback heard supporting proposed planning directions that build on existing urban areas, and focus growth in a way that supports more compact, complete, and sustainable communities. The GPC received the Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary on 2021-NOV-22.

## **DISCUSSION**

The engagement process for Phase 3 of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** launched on 2022-FEB-28, with the availability of a draft *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* for review. A Community Survey

launched on 2022-MAR-01 focused on gathering feedback on key directions in the draft. The survey provided an opportunity for participants to review and indicate their level of support for up to 84 draft directions and share comments or suggestions on how to improve the draft directions. The survey was distributed in two formats, a Statistical Survey gathered input through a mail-out format to a representative sample of residents, and a voluntary Community Survey gathered input via an online or paper open to all interested participants. Both formats asked the same questions allowing comparative analysis. Outreach for Phase 3 included a video titled “Our Future Starts Here - REIMAGINE NANAIMO Phase 3,” an interactive online Story Map exploration, downloadable Info Sheets, pop-ups at the Maple Sugar Festival, along with traditional outreach methods through media, social media, and physical information in the community.

Phase 3 closed on 2022-APR-08, with over 950 survey submissions. A Summary of Phase 3 Engagement is accessible via a link in Attachment A.

Survey feedback showed more than 75% of participants indicated support for 79 of the 84 draft directions presented in the survey (both in the Community Survey and Statistical Survey). Five draft directions received mixed feedback (i.e., less than 75% support in at least one of the survey formats). These included: Support Large-Format Retail that is Designed to be Pedestrian-Friendly and Mixed-use (51% Support in the Community Survey / 56% Support in the Statistical Survey), Support Low to Modest Infill in Neighbourhoods (72% Support in the Community Survey / 77% Support in the Statistical Survey), Encourage a Thriving Downtown through Density, Mobility, and Employment (74% Support in the Community Survey / 79% Support in the Statistical Survey), Manage Parking Supply City-Wide (58% Support in the Community Survey / 65% Support in the Statistical Survey), and Increase and Protect Industrial Lands (64% Support in the Community Survey / 81% Support in the Statistical Survey).

Qualitative comments for these five draft directions were coded (separated into themes with each theme counted to understand its prevalence) to further understand why participants indicated lower support for these draft directions. In addition, for the 79 draft directions with 75% or more support, participant comments and suggestions for potential refinements were also reviewed, themed, and summarized. For more details, please refer to Section 3.1 of the Phase 3 Engagement Summary accessed through Attachment A.

During the engagement period, the **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** team hosted events with those interested in learning more about key directions in the draft City Plan. Meeting participants included Neighbourhood Associations, local organizations, the development community, and students, among others. The format for each meeting included a presentation of key information, followed by open discussion where participants were invited to ask questions about their areas of interests and share their comments and suggestions for improvements to the draft. These meetings provided an important opportunity to delve into specific details of the draft City Plan and allow for technical questions and for exchanges about concerns or opportunities to be considered in the draft plan review process.

In addition, to provide opportunity for all members of the public to speak with the **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** team, a Community Information Session was held at the Beban Park Social Centre Lounge on 2022-MAR-29. This session provided all interested members of the community an opportunity to ask questions and engage in conversation about the draft City Plan. In addition, written submissions were also accepted via the project email. Over 325 people participated in meetings and events and over 40 written submissions were received. For details on input gathered, please see Section 3.2 of the Phase 3 Public Engagement Summary.

## **CONCLUSION**

Phase 3 engagement was the most detailed engagement in the **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** process. It required participants to review and consider draft directions and share their level of support along with their comments on those directions. The goal of this engagement was to bring together all that has been learned through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the process and understand where the draft *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* is successfully responding to the values the community has shared, and where it can be improved and refined before proceeding into the bylaw review and adoption process.

## **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.
- The output of this process is the Draft *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* ("City Plan") that integrates and serves as the City's updated Official Community Plan (OCP); updated Parks, Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Plan; updated Transportation Plan; Active Mobility Plan; updated Climate Action & Resiliency Plan; and new Accessibility & Inclusion Plan.
- Community Engagement for Phase 3 of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** on the Draft Plan launched on 2022-FEB-28 and Community Surveys open from 2022-MAR-01 until 2022-APR-08, and gathered input from over 950 survey participants, 325 meeting or event participants, and 40 written submissions. The Phase 3 Public Engagement Summary provides a detailed account of the activities and inputs during Phase 3.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Link to Phase 3 Public Engagement Summary and Appendices

### **Submitted by:**

Lisa Bhopalsingh  
Director, Community Development

### **Concurrence by:**

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager, Development  
Services/Deputy CAO