

MINUTES
GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
SHAW AUDITORIUM, VANCOUVER ISLAND CONFERENCE CENTRE,
80 COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, BC
MONDAY, 2023-JUL-17, AT 1:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor J. Perrino, Chair
Mayor L. Krog
Councillor S. Armstrong
Councillor T. Brown (joined electronically)
Councillor H. Eastmure (joined electronically)
Councillor B. Geselbracht (joined electronically 1:01 p.m.)
Councillor E. Hemmens
Councillor P. Manly (joined electronically)
Councillor I. Thorpe

Staff: R. Harding, Acting CAO/General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services/Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
B. Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works
L. Bhopalsingh, Director, Community Development
B. Corsan, Director, Corporate and Business Development
K. Ing, Director, IT/CIO (joined electronically 1:05 p.m.)
D. LaBerge, Director, Bylaw Services
L. Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning
J. Rose, Manager, Transportation
L. Mercer, Director, Finance (joined electronically 1:10 p.m.)
P. Stewart, Manager, Engineering Projects
T. Webb, Manager, Communications
B. Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transportation
Q. Nguyen, A/Transportation Planning Specialist
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
N. Sponaugle, Communications Advisor
A. Chanakos, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE GOVERNANCE AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

- (a) Agenda Item 5(a) Upcoming Topics and Initiatives – Replace document titled “Upcoming Topics and Initiatives”.
- (b) Agenda Item 6(a)(1) Presentation re: Systems Planning Organization – Add PowerPoint presentation.

(c) Remove Agenda Item 6(c)(1) – 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda, as amended, be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the following Minutes be adopted as circulated:

- Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2023-JUN-12, at 1:00 p.m.
- Minutes of the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting held in the Shaw Auditorium, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, 80 Commercial Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Monday, 2023-JUN-26, at 1:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. AGENDA PLANNING:

1. Upcoming Topics and Initiatives

Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services, spoke regarding topics and initiatives scheduled for upcoming Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meetings. Highlights included:

- A Special GPC meeting will be held 2023-JUL-26 to discuss the BC Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code Implementation, and the City of Nanaimo Privacy Management Program;
- A Special GPC meeting may be held on 2023-SEP-06 or 2023-SEP-27 to discuss the 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan, Public Safety Committee Terms of Reference, and Town Hall Implementation Strategy;
- The 2023-OCT-23 GPC meeting tentatively includes the City Plan Draft Monitoring Strategy Introduction and City Plan Monitoring Committees; and,
- An E-Town Hall will be held 2023-DEC-04 for community feedback on the 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

Committee discussion took place requesting a discussion on how taxes are calculated during the Review of City Incentives and Tax Exemption report be included at the 2023-OCT-23 GPC meeting.

6. REPORTS:

a. PROSPEROUS NANAIMO:

(1) Presentation re: Systems Planning Organization

John McCormick, Executive Director, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society, Andrew Thornton, PhD, Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society, and Don Bonner, Board Chair, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society, provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Don Bonner, Board Chair, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, spoke regarding the organizational structure of the Systems Planning Organization (SPO).

John McCormick, Executive Director, Systems Planning Organization, spoke. Highlights included:

- The health of the community revolves around housing;
- Nanaimo's population has hit 100,000 people, largely due to migration and diversity, but also includes a growing aging population;
- Approximately 1,800 people experience homelessness at least once over the course of a year; and,
- Approximately 500 people experience long-term homelessness.

Andrew Thornton, PhD, Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, spoke. Highlights included:

- The 2022 Nanaimo Point-In-Time Homelessness Count shows approximately a 20% increase in homelessness from 2020;
- At least half of those surveyed noted they lived in an encampment at least once in the last year, and a high number of people have no shelter on a nightly basis; and,
- Point-In-Time Homelessness Count data is tracked by the SPO over time and is showing an upward trend in homelessness.

John McCormick, Executive Director, Systems Planning Organization, spoke. Highlights included:

- The Health and Housing Action Plan is not binding and is more of a guiding document for the SPO to work with;
- More than 50% of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo are from Vancouver Island;
- In September the SPO will begin working with stakeholders on a community-wide plan to address homelessness over the next five years;
- Nanaimo is in need of more shelters, supportive housing, community housing and below-market rental housing to help fill the continuum of housing; and,
- The City should consider drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with the SPO to ensure continuity between elected administrators, reciprocal sharing of information and to articulate the partnership with the City to deliver the Health and Housing Action Plan.

Andrew Thornton, PhD, Research and Knowledge Mobilization Lead, Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization, noted a tentative strategy between Island Health and Vancouver Island Regional Library to have libraries across Vancouver Island serve as a hub for housing and homelessness information.

Committee discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Point-In-Time Homelessness Count data shows that 75% of people experiencing homelessness say they've lived in Nanaimo for at least a year;
- Nanaimo has many individuals released from the prison with no supports and they often fall into homelessness as a result;
- Reciprocal sharing of information would be difficult between the City and the SPO due to the confidentiality of In Camera Council meetings;
- Many people newly experiencing homelessness are on fixed incomes;
- The Homeless Individuals and Families System Information helps provide real time data from agencies that are willing to participate;
- The City is focussing more on housing individuals with mental health and substance use issues, and is not focussing enough on housing families who can't afford a large enough home;
- The SPO will be facilitating the Community Advisory Board meetings in the Fall, and will aid in the creation of a Reaching Home Community Plan to outline how the City can distribute government funding in a way that best serves the unhoused community; and,
- The SPO has met with the Mid Island Business Initiative and developers to discuss sprung buildings and the challenges faced around building supportive housing; however, discussions still need to be had with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Nanaimo Business Association.

b. CONNECTED NANAIMO:

(1) Parking Bylaw Exemption

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

- The City has \$374M in roads infrastructure, which is paid for by taxpayers;
- Parking is part of road infrastructure, and used by most of the community; and,
- As the City grows, parking demands will increase.

Presentation:

1. Patrick Zerr, McElhanney Consulting, provided a presentation. Highlights included:
 - On-street parking is primarily for the convenience of businesses and is relatively short-term;

- Off-street parking includes parking in private lots and parkades, and is intended for longer stays;
- Parking occupancy identifies how full the lots are. The general aim for parking occupancy is 85%, equating to approximately one open spot per block for parking;
- Parking demand is influenced by cost, time-limits, land use and the availability of alternatives, such as transit;
- Parking options should be safe, easy to navigate, and reliable;
- The cost of providing parking often poses a challenge for developers, and can drive up the cost of housing;
- A Downtown Nanaimo Mobility Hub study was conducted in 2019, and recommendations included increased enforcement, wayfinding, an events strategy, and improved lighting and security in parkades;
- Supply is not a concern at this time, but management is required to ensure that users can continue to access parking spots quickly and efficiently; and,
- A parking strategy could be created with key elements including pricing, enforcement, wayfinding, security, supply and demand implementation, and operational considerations.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Concerns around the lack of parking for people with disabilities and seniors, as well as in residential neighbourhoods;
- As a whole, the City has a high volume of parking; however, some areas have a higher volume of vehicles requiring parking such as the hospital and university;
- Making housing more affordable by reducing parking stalls is not realistic due to the linear geography of the City, and people's dependence on vehicles;
- Developers are often granted parking variances to encourage housing development, which causes residents to park on the street, inhibiting access to emergency vehicles;
- Most below-market housing developments have a reduction in parking spaces, resulting in not enough on-site parking for residents;
- Due to the high cost of providing parking stalls, by reducing the amount of stalls, developers can reduce the cost of housing;
- Resident parking passes are difficult to manage due to the high turnover rate of tenants, and the many areas they cover, and it is often easier to cancel tickets received by residents than to continuously update registrations;
- Staff should consider including the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness in future parking discussions;
- Discussions around incentivising car share companies to leave a car at seniors' care facilities;
- Allowing long-term resident parking in mixed-use areas creates parking issues for nearby businesses; and,

- Developers are often required to donate a small portion of land for park purposes. Consideration should be given to also include donating a portion of land for parking.

It was moved and seconded that Council direct Staff to undertake a review of the parking requirements associated with Seniors Congregate Housing and how Transportation Demand Management tools could be used to more effectively reduce the financial burdens associated with personal vehicle dependency, and to include a decision point in the 2024 – 2028 Financial Plan deliberations for additional support within the Parking Administration group to support a Parking Bylaw Exemption program. The motion carried.

Opposed: Mayor Krog

The Governance and Priorities Committee recessed the meeting at 2:58 p.m.
The Governance and Priorities Committee reconvened the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

(2) Transit Stop Amenities

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

Jamie Rose, Manager, Transportation, noted that Option 2 – Corridor-Based Hybrid was the preferred option, as it delivers a greater quality of product for residents with a more modest investment from the City.

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council support the creation of a Business Case, as part of the Business Case review for the 2024 – 2028 Financial Planning Process, informed by Option 2 – Corridor-Based Hybrid, as outlined in Attachment A – Options Paper, of the report titled “Transit Stop Amenities”, dated 2023-JUL-17. The motion carried unanimously.

(3) Allocation of Pedestrian Unallocated Funding

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

- The Pedestrian Unallocated Funding first became available in 2018 with an annual budget of \$300,000;
- Beginning in 2021, the funding was increased to \$1M; and,
- At the 2023-JUN-07 inaugural Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness meeting, praise was given by Committee members for the pedestrian upgrades implemented around the city so far.

Presentation:

1. Barbara Thomas, Assistant Manager, Transit, provided a presentation. Highlights included:
 - 2021 saw 44 projects in total, work progressed on 37 projects and 32 of those projects are complete;

- Projects in 2022 included improvements to the Trans-Canada Highway between Cranberry Road and Maki Road, pedestrian improvements in various areas of the city, and traffic calming at the Georgia Avenue Greenway, Lost Lake Road and Departure Bay beach;
- Staff presented two options, each totalling \$1M, of Pedestrian Unallocated Funding for consideration;
- Option 1 – Intersection Upgrades included:
 - Albert Street from Milton Street to Dunsmuir Street (Estimate: \$335,000)
 - Dufferin Crescent at Grant Avenue (Estimate: \$100,000)
 - Pine Street and Wentworth Street (Estimate: \$200,000)
 - 400 Block of Campbell Street (Estimate: \$75,000)
 - Howard Avenue at Regal Street (Estimate: \$50,000)
 - Dover Road at Applecross Road (Estimate: \$45,000)
 - Brickyard Road at Broadway Road (Estimate: \$150,000)
 - 3700 Block of Departure Bay Road (Estimate: \$45,000)
- Option 2 – Two Sidewalks and Albert Street Crossings included:
 - Third Street east sidewalk – Rotary Field House to Jingle Pot Road (Estimate: \$300,000)
 - Departure Bay Road south sidewalk – Alan-A-Dale to Wardropper Park (Estimate: \$365,000)
 - Albert Street from Milton Street to Dunsmuir Street (Estimate: \$335,000)

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Albert Street is intended to provide a safe route from downtown to Vancouver Island University;
- Children’s safety being weighed higher than adult safety, and safety is a known issue at Departure Bay Elementary School;
- The Governance and Priority Committee suggested replacing the Albert Street crossing in Option 1 for the Departure Bay Road south sidewalk in Option 2;
- Departure Bay Road has a higher volume of traffic than Fourth Street, and money would be better spent on Departure Bay Road; and,
- The Strategic Initiative Reserve would cover the additional \$30,000 to replace the Albert Street project with the Departure Bay Road south sidewalk.

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council approve the following projects from the Pedestrian Unallocated Funds and add \$30,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve:

1. Departure Bay Road south sidewalk – Alan-A-Dale to Wardropper Park (Estimate: \$365,000)
2. Dufferin Crescent at Grant Avenue (Estimate: \$100,000)
3. Pine Street and Wentworth Street (Estimate: \$200,000)
4. Howard Avenue at Regal Street (Estimate: \$50,000)
5. Dover Road at Applecross Road (Estimate: \$45,000)
6. Brickyard Road at Broadway Road (Estimate \$150,000)
7. 3700 Block of Departure Bay Road (Estimate: \$45,000)
8. 400 Block of Campbell Street (Estimate: \$75,000)

The motion carried.

Opposed: Mayor Krog

(4) Extension Road Traffic Calming

Introduced by Bill Sims, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works.

Presentation:

1. Quynh Nguyen, A/Transportation Planning Specialist, provided a presentation. Highlights included:
 - The traffic calming project covers Extension Road from Cranberry Avenue to Cinnabar Drive;
 - The project area is just under 2 km and includes two elementary schools;
 - Prompted by resident request, Staff conducted a traffic study in July 2020, where speeding was identified as an issue;
 - Through Council endorsement, Staff developed a Traffic Calming plan in May 2021 for Extension Road;
 - A Traffic Calming plan would minimize inconvenience for legitimate road users and maintain acceptable response targets for emergency vehicles;
 - In April 2023, Staff collected traffic speeds and volumes, and found similar results to the initial study in 2020;
 - With the exception of school zones, the speed limit along Extension Road is 50 km/h; however, the 85th percentile of speed was found to be 63km/h, with a maximum speed recorded at 130 km/h on a Friday night;
 - Using internal feedback, a proposed plan was finalized at the end of 2022;
 - In January 2023, project signage was installed along the Chase River corridor, and the proposed plan was available for viewing on the City's website;
 - Staff held two meetings with the Chase River Community Association, one meeting with Chase River Parent Advisory Committee and received 58 email responses from the general public;

- Of those email responses, 27% were in favor, 27% were against, and 46% provided mixed feedback, with most people supportive of traffic calming initiatives but concerned with road narrowing at certain intersections;
- Staff modified the design based on public feedback, including relocating the speed table, revising the location of road narrowing, and adjusting driveway access;
- In addition, speed reader boards will be installed below school zone signs;
- Crosswalk improvements would include concrete medians installed at crosswalks to shorten walking distance, and tactile walking surface indicators;
- Following endorsement, construction would begin in the Fall of 2023 and be complete by the Spring of 2024; and,
- Traffic speeds and volume would be monitored post-project to measure it's effectiveness.

Committee and Staff discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Concerns regarding concrete medians installed for traffic calming causing potential issues for larger trucks;
- No traffic calming will be installed on the hill at Chase River Elementary School due to icy conditions during winter months; and,
- Traffic flow and the open feel of the area make it difficult to drive the posted speed limit.

It was moved and seconded that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council approve advancement of Extension Road traffic calming to the implementation stage with funding from the 2023 Financial Plan. The motion carried.

Opposed: *Councillor Armstrong*

7. QUESTION PERIOD:

The Committee received one question from the public regarding agenda items.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:08 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CHAIR

CORPORATE OFFICER