

DATE OF MEETING January 15, 2024  
AUTHORED BY CHRISTY WOOD, MANAGER OF SOCIAL PLANNING  
**SUBJECT NANAIMO ACUTE RESPONSE TABLE**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with an update on the Nanaimo Acute Response Table, and seek Council's endorsement to sign an Integrated Program Agreement with the Province of British Columbia as represented by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Minister of Children and Family Development.

### **Recommendation**

That Council authorize the Mayor to enter into an Integrated Program Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, as represented by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Minister of Children and Family Development to support the activities of the Nanaimo Acute Response Table, also known as the Situation Table.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the 2020-AUG-31 Regular Council Meeting, Council received a delegation from MLA Sheila Malcolmson sharing information about the Situation Table model and its use as a tool to address community safety and connect vulnerable people with services to prevent crime, crisis, and social disorder. In response to the delegation, Council passed the following motion:

*"That the City of Nanaimo organize a meeting for the Solicitor General Ministry staff to present the situation table model to the Nanaimo-based agencies and non-profits that might form Nanaimo's Situation Table; and that a letter of general support be provided for the concept of establishing a Situation Table in Nanaimo and any associated grant opportunities."*

On 2021-FEB-26, the Nanaimo RCMP submitted an application to the Province's Office of Crime Reduction and Gang Outreach for \$30,000 in funding to establish a Situation Table in Nanaimo. On 2021-MAR-11, the City of Nanaimo received \$30,000 to train new Situation Table members, acquire equipment and software required to facilitate meetings and collect data on risk factors, and to participate in an evaluation of the Situation Table activities and impacts.

A Situation Table is a multi-agency team that meets on a regular basis and is focused on addressing specific situations where the probability of a vulnerable individual or family experiencing harm is imminent, significant, and requires the support of multiple social service agencies to reduce such risks. A Situation Table supports vulnerable individuals or families that

meet a criteria referred as Acutely Elevated Risk (AER). The AER criteria must be met in order for the table to receive a referral and offer supports and services. The AER criteria includes:

- Significant community interest at stake;
- Probability of harm occurring;
- Significant risk of serious physical or mental harm to themselves or others; and,
- Requires support from more than one social agency to reduce risk factors.

Situation Tables assists front line staff from public safety, health, and social service sectors identify vulnerable people to share information, work collaboratively and rapidly to connect people to services before they experience a negative or traumatic event, for example, victimization, overdose, eviction, or criminalization. Unlike most reactive responses, the table provides collaborative interventions that are pre-emptive and supportive, with the aim of avoiding sanctions that would otherwise be more traumatic, negative, and/or life threatening for individuals or families.

## **DISCUSSION**

Nanaimo's Situation Table launched its first meeting on 2023-JAN-31. In June 2023, the Nanaimo Situation Table changed their name to the Nanaimo Acute Response Table (N-ART) to better reflect the table's activities. The N-ART has 21 agencies participating at the table and includes the following organizations:

- BGC Vancouver Island
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Mid Island Branch
- City of Nanaimo
- Community Living BC
- Connective Society
- Haven Society
- Island Crisis Care Society
- Island Health
- Kwumut Lelum Child and Family Services
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Social Development
- Nanaimo and Area Resource Services for Families
- Nanaimo Association for Community Living
- Nanaimo Family Life Association
- Pacifica Housing Advisory Association
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Vancouver Island Mental Health Society
- Vancouver Island University

The N-ART is facilitated bi-weekly by two co-chairs, the City's Manager of Social Planning and a faculty member from Vancouver Island University's Criminology Department. The City's Community Policing Coordinator acts as the data recorder for each meeting. An average of eight hours weekly is provided by City Staff to support the activities of the table. In addition, the

City's Community Safety Officers attend the bi-weekly meetings, and where appropriate are involved in intervention activities. The City provides meeting space for the N-ART.

Between 2023-JAN-31 and 2023-DEC-31, the N-ART held 24 meetings and received 28 referrals. The most common risk factors for referrals include drug use, mental health issues, lack of or access to appropriate housing, alcohol use, and criminal involvement. Out of 28 referrals:

- 15 individuals were connected to services or personal supports, lowering their overall risks;
- Seven individuals were informed about services, however, were not yet connected to services or the risks were systemic in nature;
- Three referrals were closed due to relocation;
- Two referrals did not meet the AER criteria and were referred back to the originating agency to explore other options; and
- One referral remains open, meaning that the planning and delivery of supports and services is underway.

Eight referrals were for individuals ranging between the ages of 30 to 39, making it the highest age group referred, however there were 12 referrals that spanned over two age categories that involved individuals under the age of 25. 20 referrals were for individuals identifying as female, seven for males, and one for a family.

The following summary points provides some examples of the successes and challenges experienced thus far by the N-ART:

- *Nanaimo Acute Response Table – Successes*
  - Information Sharing: the ability to share information between service providers has provided better supports for individuals living with AER; allowing a more holistic approach to service provision to better reduce overall risks.
  - Ability to locate vulnerable individuals: many individuals living at risk are transient and hard to locate. Through collaboration between front line service providers and outreach teams, the N-ART is able to locate individuals allowing front line staff to offer supports and services to those who often fall through the gaps of service provision.
  - Community of practice: the N-ART has provided a forum for where innovative ideas are shared on how to provide supports and services more efficiently and effectively within limited capacity and resources. In addition, the N-ART meetings have become a supportive environment for front line professionals facing complex social issues.
- *Nanaimo Acute Response Table – Challenges*
  - Referrals: N-ART members acknowledge that there are many individuals living with AER however, due to limited capacity within organizations it can be challenging getting referrals to the table. Processes are being developed within organizations to increase the number of referrals.
  - Lack of capacity and resources: overall there is a lack of services to address the needs of individuals living with the most complex issues. Staffing shortages also make it challenging to respond to referrals in a timely manner.

- Lack of sustained funding from the Province: funds received from the Ministry of PSSG is a one time grant to support training costs, the purchasing of equipment to collect data, and any costs associated with participating in evaluation processes. Funds are not provided to cover Staff time required to facilitate the meetings, room rentals, or any other materials needed to coordinate the activities of the table.

### **Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General – Integrated Program Agreement**

Situation Tables are a joint mandate commitment between the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) and the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. Staff from the Ministry of PSSG support the implementation of Situation Tables in BC by providing community outreach and engagement support, grant funding for training, the facilitation of a community of practice for all Situation Table Chairs in BC, and professional development and operational training. In addition, Ministry of PSSG staff provide administration support for privacy impact assessments and integrated program agreements, and host the risk tracking database used by each Situation Table. There are 33 Situation Tables operating in BC supported by the Ministry of PSSG.

The Integrated Program Agreement (IPA) administered by the Ministry of PSSG outlines the mandate and activities of the Situation Table, the requirement to adhere to AER in regards to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation and the sharing of confidential information, and garners the commitment of agencies to participate in regular meetings and where appropriate, offer supports and services. Each IPA is created between the Ministry of PSSG and the community as tables become established. Staff from the Ministry of PSSG have initiated the IPA process with the N-ART and as the hosting municipality, the Ministry requires the City to be a signatory on the IPA. The IPA template is provided for Council's information as Attachment A.

There are no financial implications for the City should Council wish to proceed with the IPA for the N-ART, however approximately eight hours of Staff time weekly will be required to coordinate and facilitate the activities of the table for the duration of the IPA until 2031-MAY-01. The IPA may be terminated without penalty by any signing party by providing at least 90 days' written notice.

### **OPTIONS**

1. That Council authorize the Mayor to enter into a Integrated Program Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, as represented by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Minister of Children and Family Development to support the activities of the Nanaimo Acute Response Table, also known as the Situation Table.
  - The advantages of this option: vulnerable individuals and families living with acutely elevated risk will have access to a multi-agency team that can intervene and connect them to services before experiencing a negative or traumatic event.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Staff time will be required to facilitate and coordinate the activities of the Nanaimo Acute Response Table until 2031-MAY-01.
  - Financial Implications: None.

2. That Council provide alternate direction. |

**SUMMARY POINTS**

- A Situation Table is a multi-agency team that meets on a regular basis and is focused on addressing specific situations where the probability of a vulnerable person or family experiencing harm is imminent, significant, and requires the support of multiple social service sectors to reduce such risks.
- Situation Tables assists front line staff from public safety, health, and social service sectors identify vulnerable people to share information, work collaboratively and rapidly to connect people to services before they experience a negative or traumatic event, for example, victimization, overdose, eviction, or criminalization.
- Nanaimo's Situation Table, renamed in June 2023 as the Nanaimo Acute Response Table, has received 28 referrals between 2023-JAN-31 and 2023-DEC-31.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: Mobilization and Resiliency Table Integrated Program Agreement Template

**Submitted by:**

Christy Wood  
Manager, Social Planning |

**Concurrence by:**

Dave LaBerge  
Director, Public Safety

Richard Harding  
General Manager, Community Services /  
Deputy CAO  
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