

DATE OF MEETING January 20, 2025
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SUBJECT WOODGROVE AREA PLAN UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the Woodgrove Area Plan, phases in the project, and community engagement.

BACKGROUND

City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined (City Plan) identifies six Secondary Urban Centres that are envisioned to be Nanaimo's primary hubs of activity with the highest intensity of land uses and an increased mix of uses and forms appropriate for each centre. Each Secondary Urban Centre is intended to be a complete community that includes housing, employment, services, and amenities, and allows for daily needs to be met without the requirement for travel outside the Urban Centre.

The Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre is recognized as the City's northern gateway, serving a city-wide and regional centre function for commercial activity. The urban centre is envisioned to develop as the northern mobility hub where major regional and city-wide mobility networks connect, and with an integrated mix of residential, commercial, recreational, and cultural components.

City Plan policy prioritizes preparing Area Plans for Urban Centres. The Area Plans are intended to be a tool to manage development and provide more detailed policy direction on a range of matters including land use; transportation; servicing; parks, recreation, culture and wellness; and plan implementation. Council has prioritized the preparation of an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre in the *Integrated Action Plan*:

“Priority Action #196: Prepare an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre that provides detailed land use, policy guidance, infrastructure planning, and amenity needs”.

To support the creation of a Woodgrove Area Plan, Complete Communities funding was secured. The grant funds are to be used to assess how to transform the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre into a complete community. A consultant has been retained to carryout the assessment.]

DISCUSSION

Purpose

The purpose of the Woodgrove Area Plan will be to provide more detailed land use and policy guidance for future development to remove constraints, coordinate infrastructure, and identify amenity needs. The project team includes staff from the Regional District of Nanaimo and the City of Nanaimo's departments of Planning and Development; Transportation; Engineering; and Parks, Recreation, and Culture. The Plan is intended to build on *City Plan* and the Nanaimo Framework of Five City Goals. The scope of the Woodgrove Area Plan includes the lands within the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre as shown in Attachment A. However, a wider lens will be cast for the purposes of preparing the Area Plan, as Woodgrove serves both a city-wide and regional function.

Objectives

The objectives of the Woodgrove Area Plan are as follows:

1. Build on *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* desired outcomes, policies, and public input;
2. Refine the vision and desired outcomes for the study area that will guide its evolution over the next 25 years, within the context of the new Provincial Housing Legislation;
3. Develop a future growth concept and development policies for where and how new development can be integrated into the scope area over time (if/when development is proposed);
4. Identify implementation actions and monitoring to determine what infrastructure and public amenity investments are needed to realize the growth concept; and,
5. Produce a Woodgrove Area Plan document that represents the community visions for growth for the area and acts as a tool for the development community in realizing that vision.

Scope of Work

The proposed scope of work for the Woodgrove Area Plan involves four phases outlined below. Phases 1, 2, and 3 have been determined based on the Complete Communities funding guidelines and requirements. Phases 1, 2, and 3 must be substantially complete by October 2025.

Phase 1 – Baseline & Needs Assessment

Phase 1A | Complete a 'Baseline Assessment' to determine the current state of the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre as it relates to the following:

- Supply of housing, office, and employment;
- Capacity of the transportation network and transit;
- Capacity of the sewer and water infrastructure; and,
- Access to parks, recreation, culture, and wellness facilities.

Phase 1B | Building off the 'Baseline Assessment', complete a 'Needs Assessment' to determine the following:

- Projected demand for housing, employment, and office;
- Projected transportation infrastructure demands;
- Projected sewer and water infrastructure demands; and,
- Projected parks, recreation, culture and wellness demands.

Phase 1B will include the first round of community engagement, which will focus on sharing the results of the 'Baseline & Needs Assessment' and gathering the community's input on their vision, goals, and needs for the area. As *City Plan* provides a high-level vision and policy direction for the area, the intent of engagement is to seek feedback on what will make this area unique.

Phase 2 – Scenarios Testing: Identify benchmark indicators and test two (2) to three (3) 'future case' scenarios as they relate to housing, transportation, infrastructure, and access to daily needs. Testing will involve evaluating each action to determine its impact, feasibility, cost, and implementation logistics. This will help to prioritize viable actions that move us closer to achieving the community's vision and goals identified in Phase 1.

A second round of community engagement will include seeking feedback on the 2 to 3 'future case' scenarios. The community will have an opportunity to evaluate various actions the City can take and understand the trade-offs present in pursuing any one of the possible future directions.

Phase 3 – Preferred Scenario: Develop a preferred scenario with supporting policies, design guidelines, actions, and monitoring framework. This information will be formulated into the technical document, the 'Woodgrove Urban Centre Assessment Report', to meet the requirements of the 'Complete Communities' grant.

The final round of community engagement will include seeking input on the preferred scenario including policies, design guidelines, action, and monitoring framework. The feedback will be used to inform the final document, the Woodgrove Area Plan.

Phase 4 – Woodgrove Area Plan: Prepare the Woodgrove Area Plan, that provides detailed land use, policy guidance, infrastructure planning, and daily needs. Key aspects of the plan will include:

- policies relating to land use, transportation, infrastructure, and access to daily needs;
- mapping to support the policy framework, where appropriate;
- form and character design guidelines;
- implementation actions; and,
- monitoring framework.

The Woodgrove Area Plan is intended to form part of *City Plan*, with the implementation actions and monitoring framework incorporating into the *Integrated Action Plan* and Monitoring Strategy.

Community Engagement

The Woodgrove Area Plan is intended to be reflective of the community's input and aspirations. A Community Engagement Plan is proposed that follows the IAP2 spectrum of participation principles and provides accessible and flexible approaches for seeking and understanding the ideas, needs, and values of the community and key stakeholders. Engagement is proposed with private property owners, special interest groups (such as the Dover Neighbourhood Association

and students and staff at Dover Bay Secondary and McGirr Elementary) as well as the general public. A mix of engagement approaches are proposed including digital and in-person tools.

Digital Outreach

- Website: A project page and ‘Get Involved’ webpage will be used to provide updates on the project and seek feedback.
- E-Notifications: ‘My Nanaimo This Week’ will be used to issue e-notifications at key milestones.
- Social Media: Various platforms will be utilized as well as cross-promotion opportunities.
- Surveys: These will be used to seek feedback from the general community.
- Online Meetings: These will be used to hold discussions with key stakeholders such as private property owners.

In-Person Outreach

- In-Person Meetings: Where best suited, in-person meetings will be held with key stakeholders such as special interest groups.

Timeline

The Woodgrove Area Plan is scheduled to begin in January 2025 and be complete by the first quarter of 2026. As the Plan is intended to form part of *City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined*, an amendment bylaw to *City Plan* is needed, triggering a public hearing. As a result, Section 475 – ‘Consultation During the Development of Official Community Plan’ of the *Local Government Act* will be followed.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council has prioritized the preparation of an Area Plan for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre that provides detailed land use, policy guidance, infrastructure planning, and amenity needs.
- The scope of work includes four phases: A Baseline and Needs Assessment; Scenario Testing; Preferred Scenario; and the final Woodgrove Area Plan.
- The Community Engagement Plan is proposed that provides accessible and flexible approaches for seeking and understanding the ideas, needs, and values of the community and key stakeholders.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre. |

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