

Toward a Nanaimo Accord: A Shared Vision for Action

Overview

Nanaimo is a city on the rise but we lack a shared, compelling statement of who we are becoming and what we will stand for. To secure our future prosperity, we need a clear identity and a coordinated agenda for action.

We propose the creation of a Nanaimo Accord: a short, powerful document that sets out the principles, ambitions, and identity that will set Nanaimo apart as one of British Columbia's most successful, high-quality, dynamic, and diverse cities.

This Accord will not replace existing plans like the City Plan. Instead, it will complement them by giving institutions, governments, businesses, and investors a rallying cry for collaboration and investment. It will be principle-driven, action-oriented, and designed to align local efforts and external support around a clear and compelling future.

The Accord will recognize that Nanaimo is a living system, where our environment, economy, culture, and community are interconnected. It will frame our future not as a set of isolated actions but as a set of reinforcing efforts that build on each other, creating momentum and resilience.

The work will deliver two major outputs:

- First, the Nanaimo Accord itself, identifying our shared principles, identity, and ambitions. Target completion: October 2025.

**The Accord could be revealed at the Vancouver Island State of the Island Economic Summit, setting the stage for a dynamic 2026 launch of action and advocacy.*

- Second, a curated Portfolio of prioritized projects, strategies, and initiatives that advance the Accord's vision and can drive real-world action. Target completion: December 2025.

To achieve these outcomes, we will follow a three-phase work plan that ensures vision, priority actions, and momentum are all developed together.

With focused leadership from the Mayor's Leaders' Table, active collaboration from key institutions, and a disciplined, pragmatic approach, we can lay the foundation for a generation of success and rally the partners needed to get there.

Work Plan: Three Clear Phases

Phase 1: Building the Accord and Early Opportunity Discovery

May 2025 to October 2025

Objectives:

- Define guiding principles and ambitions
- Build institutional and sectoral support
- Surface early project and strategy opportunities
- Finalize and launch the Nanaimo Accord

Key Activities:

- Establish a Core Design Team drawn from the Mayor's Table and key partners.
- Run a rapid Current State and Opportunity scan using existing plans and studies.
- Facilitate co-creation workshops with key stakeholders to shape principles and explore priority actions.
- Circulate a draft Accord for feedback and endorsements.
- Finalize the Accord in time for the VIEA Summit.

Phase 2: Portfolio Development and Prioritization

October 2025 to December 2025

Objectives:

- Refine and prioritize the project and strategy opportunities identified during Phase 1
- Develop a structured, fundable Portfolio of high-impact initiatives aligned with the Accord
- Build early-stage funding and partnership strategies

Key Activities:

- Conduct targeted Priority Sprint workshops with key institutions.
- Cluster potential projects into categories such as Capital, Policy, Programmatic, and Systems Initiatives.
- Apply a simple Prioritization Matrix evaluating Impact, Influence, and Readiness.
- Draft and validate a Prioritized Project Portfolio
- Match top initiatives to potential funding partners and advocacy opportunities

Phase 3: Launch and Action

January 2026 onward

Objectives:

- Begin implementation and advocacy.
- Use the Accord and Portfolio to drive funding proposals, partnerships, and investments.
- Establish ongoing governance for tracking and adapting the vision.

Key Activities:

- Public launch of the Accord and Portfolio.
- Targeted government and funder engagement.
- Set up a lightweight Charter Stewardship Group to maintain momentum.
- Begin the first wave of initiatives aligned with the Accord.

Conclusion

What makes this work powerful is that it grows out of what we are already doing together.

Through the stakeholder mapping we have underway, we can see just how connected Nanaimo really is, and how much strength we have when we move as a system, not as isolated organizations.

The work ahead with the Accord and the Portfolio is a natural extension of that insight. It is a way to turn what we have recognized here, that collective action will shape Nanaimo's future, into something visible, investable, and real.

We have already started building the foundation. Now we have the opportunity to take the next step together.

APPENDIX A

How does this relate to the living systems approach to strategic planning?

The way the plan is structured already embeds living systems thinking. Specifically:

- The Accord itself is about recognizing that Nanaimo's future identity, economy, environment, and community systems are interdependent.
- The priority projects and strategies are intended to reinforce each other - not isolated initiatives but linked investments and actions that create cascading benefits (like how living systems evolve).
- The process (especially workshops and the Current State/Opportunity Scan) is designed to surface connections - across sectors, institutions, and opportunities - rather than treating issues or projects in isolation.
- The implementation phase is intended to be flexible and adaptive, meaning it learns and evolves based on what emerges - another living systems principle.

Clarifying the Two Outputs and Three Phases

Two outputs:

1. the Nanaimo Accord and
2. the Prioritized Project Portfolio.

Three phases of work:

1. build the Accord and early opportunities,
2. finalize and prioritize the Portfolio,
3. launch and act.

Key Messages for the Mayor's Leaders' Table

- This is not another static plan. It is a rallying point for action and investment.
- Our work will respect that Nanaimo is a living system, where economic, environmental, and social vitality are connected.
- We are moving fast and focusing on what we can influence now.
- Visible leadership across sectors will reinforce Nanaimo's reputation as a serious and ambitious city.
- Action starts January 2026, supported by a clear, shared vision and a ready list of initiatives.

APPENDIX B

Why \$50–60K is reasonable for our scope:

1. We are NOT running a massive, city-wide, multi-year public consultation like an Official Community Plan.
2. We already have anchor institutions identified and at the table - no need for heavy discovery phases.
3. The stakeholder mapping and City Plan already exist - we can lean on them rather than commissioning expensive new research.
4. The deliverables are short and strategic - we are not writing a 300-page economic strategy or a land use plan.
5. Public engagement is scoped tightly - no need for surveys, open houses, or major facilitation events.
6. We can apply some internal capacity - a part-time project coordinator (NPC) and in-house graphic design support (?) can reduce external costs.

How the approach would need to be scaled to fit \$50-60K:

- Lean facilitation: only 2–3 targeted sessions with prepared stakeholders.
- Document simplicity: Accord = 5–8 pages; Portfolio = short strategic profiles of key projects.
- Rapid current state scan: desktop research, no new surveys or studies.
- Minimal overhead: use stakeholder facilities for meetings; minimal travel or honoraria.
- Strategic, not operational: focus on principles and major initiatives, not detailed operational action plans.

Practical Summary

\$50–60K buys us:

- A strong, professional process
- A high-quality Accord
- A credible and fundable Project Portfolio
- A public-ready launch package
- Focused, efficient stakeholder engagement

It does not buy:

- Full public consultation
- Dozens of workshops
- Deep operational planning or business cases for each project