

Coordinated Strategic Planning for Nanaimo's Key Institutions

Introduction

Nanaimo stands at a pivotal moment, with the potential to harness collective strengths for a prosperous future. By aligning the strategic efforts of our city's key institutions, we can drive sustainable economic growth and enhance community well-being.

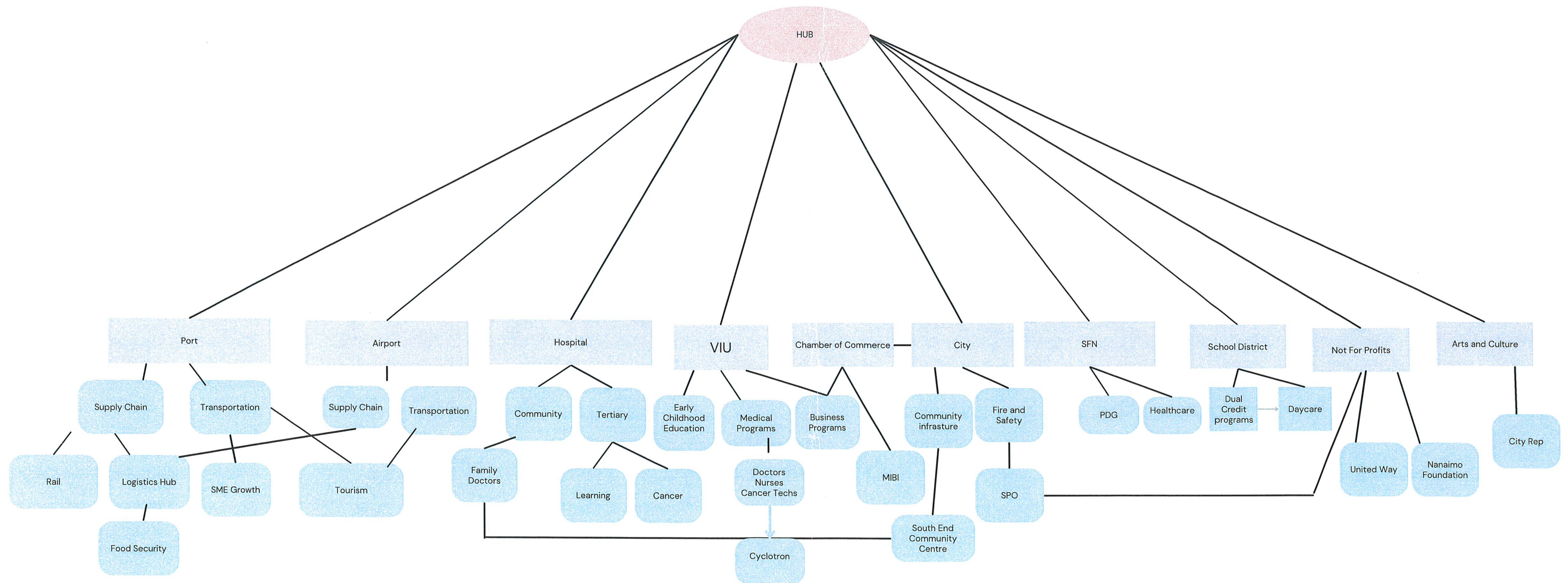
The Opportunity

- **Unified Vision:** Collaborative planning ensures all institutions work towards shared goals, amplifying impact.
- **Compelling Storytelling and Advocacy:** A shared narrative enhances our ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders, attract investment, and influence policy decisions.
- **Resource Optimization:** Pooling resources leads to efficient project execution and reduces redundancies.
- **Enhanced Competitiveness:** A cohesive strategy positions Nanaimo as an attractive destination for investors and talent.

Why Act Now?

- **Growth Opportunities:** Emerging sectors like life sciences, transportation, logistics, and advanced manufacturing are ripe for development.
- **Economic Resilience:** In uncertain times, a united approach strengthens our ability to adapt and thrive.
- **Community Well-being:** Collaborative efforts can address pressing social issues, improving quality of life for all residents.

Who is Nanaimo?



Narrative Arc for City Council Presentation

1. Nanaimo Is Ready for What Comes Next

- Our city is growing in complexity and ambition.
- Institutions are doing important work - but often in isolation.
- This is our moment to connect what we're already doing and move forward together.

2. We Need a Shared Frame for Complex Times

- Strategic plans abound, but what's missing is a shared reference point.
- The Nanaimo Accord is not a new plan - it's a framework that makes existing work easier to align and easier to amplify.
- It helps us clarify direction without adding new demands.

3. This Builds Directly on What We've Already Done

- The groundwork is in place: the City Plan, the Mayor's Leaders' Table, the strategic maps of who is doing what.
- This isn't a reinvention. It's the natural next step.
- The Accord and Portfolio bring coherence and momentum to work already underway across sectors.

4. This Is a Living Systems Approach

- Borrowed from nature, this approach sees the city as a dynamic, interdependent system.
- It values feedback, adaptability, and coordination over control.
- This mindset shaped the City Plan, and now guides how we act on it.

5. The Mayor's Leaders' Table Sparked the Vision

- Leaders from across institutions came together with the humility to ask, "What could we do if we moved as one?"
- What emerged was a call for shared stewardship - not a centralized plan, but a shared ambition.
- The Table continues to hold space for this conversation, offering guidance and legitimacy without asserting control.
- Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation is supporting the work—coordinating engagement, facilitating development, and helping turn shared vision into visible action.

6. Our Mapping Work Shows the System Already Exists

- The “Who Is Nanaimo” mapping exercise revealed a dense, interwoven civic fabric.
- These connections are real. The Accord helps us activate them more intentionally.

7. The Accord Is Our Collective Commitment

- A voluntary, high-level statement of values and direction.
- It complements - not replaces - existing plans.
- It's a way for each organization to stay true to its mission while contributing to a larger whole.

8. The Portfolio Is How We Make It Real

- A curated set of initiatives that reflect shared ambition and reinforce each other.
- Designed to accelerate what's already in motion - not add more to the pile.
- It helps funders and partners see where alignment is possible and where investment will matter most.

9. This Work Is Already Underway

- Phase 1 (June–October 2025): Define the Accord and surface shared opportunities.
- Phase 2 (October–December 2025): Shape a focused, fundable Portfolio.
- Phase 3 (2026 onward): Launch, implement, and adapt.

10. The Budget Is Lean, and the Value Is High

- \$50–60K delivers a credible, fundable process - with smart use of in-house capacity.
- It's scaled to reflect the fact that much of the groundwork is already done.
- We're not starting from scratch - we're building with what we have.

11. Institutions Are Not Being Asked to Surrender Control

- Endorsement of the Accord doesn't create new obligations or bureaucracy.
- It signals clarity, readiness, and seriousness.
- It's about leadership - not ownership.

12. This Is a Moment to Lead Together

- We're not proposing a silver bullet or a top-down fix.
- We're inviting institutions to help shape and steward a shared path forward.
- Together, we can shift from parallel efforts to collective progress - and show what it looks like to move like a system.

- The Table's role is to convene. NPC's role is to coordinate. Success depends on participation, not permission.

From Vision to Action: Introducing the Prioritized Project Portfolio

If the Nanaimo Accord is our shared compass, the Prioritized Project Portfolio is how we begin to move. It is the living translation of our collective vision, values, and guiding principles into meaningful action. It answers the question, “What do we do with this?” with concrete, coordinated steps forward.

This Portfolio is not another plan. It is a tool for alignment and acceleration. A curated collection of projects and strategies that reflect our ambitions, leverage our existing assets, and activate the conditions for long-term success.

This is not about adding new work to everyone's plates. It is about seeing our current efforts through a shared lens. The Portfolio helps us identify where we already have momentum, where new collaboration could unlock value, and where investment would generate the most meaningful return.

Why a Portfolio?

Cities are living systems. Their strength lies not in static strategies but in the flow of effort, energy, and ideas. The Portfolio is designed with that in mind. It evolves as we learn. It grows through contribution. It is shaped by experimentation and by the feedback loops of real-world outcomes.

Rather than treating projects as isolated bets, the Portfolio clusters and curates initiatives that reinforce one another. This approach creates cascading benefits and allows us to move with purpose, even in the face of complexity.

The Portfolio also sends a signal. It tells funders, partners, and citizens that we are serious about implementation. It translates ambition into investable action.

How It Unfolds: A Three-Phase Approach

The Portfolio is not a standalone product. It is the natural outgrowth of the Accord and follows a clear, pragmatic workplan. This three-phase process ensures that ideas and actions evolve together.

Phase 1: Build the Accord and Discover Early Opportunities

May to October 2025

This phase focuses on shared principles and early alignment. It surfaces opportunities for coordinated action and prepares us to launch the Accord.

Key activities include:

- Defining guiding principles and shared ambitions
- Convening a Core Design Team drawn from the Mayor's Leaders Table and key institutions
- Conducting a rapid scan of existing plans, partnerships, and possibilities
- Facilitating co-creation workshops to shape the Accord and explore project ideas
- Circulating and finalizing the Accord in time for the VIEA Summit (Oct 28-30, 2025)

Phase 2: Develop and Prioritize the Portfolio

October to December 2025

This is where the Portfolio takes shape. We move from a long list of ideas to a focused set of high-impact initiatives.

Key activities include:

- Running targeted workshops with institutional and community partners
- Clustering project ideas into strategic categories (Capital, Policy, Programmatic, and Systems)
- Applying a simple prioritization matrix (based on Impact, Influence, and Readiness)
- Drafting and validating the Prioritized Project Portfolio
- Matching top initiatives to funders, investors, and advocacy opportunities

Phase 3: Launch and Act

Beginning January 2026

With the Accord in place and the Portfolio ready, we begin to move. This phase is about implementation, advocacy, and ongoing learning.

Key activities include:

- Publicly launching the Accord and the Portfolio
- Engaging funders and governments with clear asks and compelling cases
- Standing up a light-touch stewardship group to track progress and adapt as needed
- Initiating the first wave of priority initiatives

How We Choose What to Prioritize

The Portfolio is not exhaustive. It is intentionally selective. Projects and strategies are chosen based on their alignment with the Accord, their potential for system-wide benefit, and their readiness to move.

We look for initiatives that:

- Reflect the principles and identity outlined in the Accord
- Build on existing momentum or remove key barriers
- Demonstrate potential for cascading benefits across systems
- Invite participation from multiple sectors
- Are feasible, fundable, and measurable

This is how we move from scattered effort to collective progress.

Who Is Holding the Process?

The Mayor's Leaders' Table continues to provide the space for shared ambition and direction. It is a forum for coordination, not control.

The Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation is supporting the work by providing facilitation, coordination, and technical support throughout the process.

Success, however, depends on participation and shared stewardship. This is not the work of any one organization. It is a shared opportunity and a shared responsibility.

Why It Matters

The Accord gave us a shared compass. The Portfolio gives us a shared course of action. Together, they mark a shift in how we work as a community.

We are not just writing another strategy. We are designing the conditions for real change - guided by principle, grounded in practice, and shaped by what we learn along the way.

This is what it looks like to move like a living system. Not with rigid plans, but with coordinated action. Not alone, but together.