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**SUBJECT WOODGROVE AREA PLAN – PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY
& PHASE 2 GROWTH SCENARIOS**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To present the Woodgrove Area Plan project Phase 1 Engagement results and the Phase 2 Growth Scenarios Assessment findings.

BACKGROUND

On 2025-MAR-24, the *Woodgrove Area Plan Phase 1 - Baseline Assessment Report* was presented to Council for information. The report provided an assessment of the current state of the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre as it relates to the supply of housing, daily needs, retail, capacity of the transportation and transit network, and capacity of sewer and water infrastructure. The key findings included:

- Approximately 568 housing units in the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre area; 92% of which are in apartment style buildings that are five storeys in height or less; 57% of which are rental in apartment housing forms; 92% of which is comprised of one and two-bedroom units; and none of which is non-market.
- The Woodgrove area generally has good access to public transit, with potential improvements identified, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians.
- All intersections within the Woodgrove area are performing within typical thresholds, indicating sufficient capacity to handle existing traffic volumes during peak periods.
- While the Woodgrove area has much service commercial space, the low vacancy rate of the existing commercial units demonstrates that there is potential for more commercial development in the area.
- The retail landscape in the Woodgrove area is predominantly characterized by chain retailers, which hold 56.8% of all business licenses, followed by local retailers (30.5%) and vacant units (12.7%).
- There is a need for parks, recreation and culture facilities, as well as other services to ensure access to daily needs for residents of the area.
- Existing sanitary sewer and water systems can handle existing populations and projected OCP population with the currently scheduled upgrades, but some sections are nearing or at capacity with additional population growth in the Woodgrove area plan. Additional population beyond OCP population will require substantial investment to expand underground infrastructure, and current DCC revenue is insufficient to cover this.

In addition, Phase 1 included obtaining input from the community on the baseline results and the desired vision for the Woodgrove Urban Centre.

Woodgrove Area Plan Process

The Woodgrove Area Plan project is currently in Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios. The purpose of Phase 2 is to understand how actions can move us closer to achieving a complete community and what implications future growth might have on the transportation and infrastructure networks, and Woodgrove residents' ability to access their daily needs. This phase builds on *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* future land use designation policies, the Phase 1 – Baseline Assessment report and Phase 1 – Engagement Summary. Phase 3 will focus on translating the learnings and recommendations from earlier phases into policies and actions. Throughout all phases, ongoing public involvement remains a cornerstone of the process, ensuring that the evolving plan continues to reflect the community's vision for a complete community.]

DISCUSSION

Phase 1 – Engagement Summary Results

The *Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 1 Engagement Summary* report (see Attachment A) encapsulates the main findings and strategic direction emerging from the first phase of engagement for the Woodgrove Area Plan project. The report summarized the outreach conducted in March and April 2025, synthesizes the perspectives of over 1,200 participants and outlines community priorities, concerns, and aspirations for the Woodgrove Urban Centre.

Engagement Process & Participation: Phase 1 engagement included an online survey, virtual and in-person workshops, and classroom sessions, reaching 1,297 participants. Most participants were Nanaimo residents, with representation from nearby jurisdictions. Respondents were predominantly women, homeowners, and aged 20–65. Youth and teenagers were notably underrepresented in survey responses; however, youth were engaged via classroom sessions at elementary schools. Efforts were made to directly engage with high school students through classroom sessions but were unsuccessful. Outreach efforts included social media, bus posters, media releases, newspaper ads, and a radio interview, resulting in high visibility and diverse input.

Thematic Priorities:

- **Housing:** Strong support for a diverse mix of housing types and tenures, addressing affordability and inclusivity.
- **Transportation:** Calls for improved pedestrian safety, better cycling infrastructure, and solutions to traffic congestion.
- **Daily Needs:** Desire for more green spaces, parks, community and recreation facilities, support for local businesses, and enhanced public amenities.
- **Infrastructure:** Concerns about stormwater management, sustainability, and electrical capacity, with limited focus on traditional utilities.

Community feedback in addition to the findings of the *Phase 1 – Baseline Assessment Report*, were used to inform the parameters of the growth scenarios – Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios Assessment

The *Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios Assessment* report (see Attachment B) outlines the growth scenario parameters, the findings and next steps.

Growth Scenario Assessment Parameters:

Using the methodology prescribed by the Complete Communities assessment guide, three growth scenarios were analyzed using the four complete community lenses: housing, transportation, access to daily needs and infrastructure. These lenses represent the key elements and characteristics to create a complete community.

The purpose of the analysis was to understand: 1) the implications future residential and commercial growth may have on the transportation and infrastructure networks, and Woodgrove residents' ability to access their daily needs; and 2) the actions that can be taken to move us closer to achieving a complete community.

The following parameters (i.e. assumptions), shown in the table below were applied to all three growth scenarios. They are based on projections completed for *City Plan* and assume a 30-year time horizon.

Parameter	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
New Population	2,500 people	5,000 people	7,500 people
New Housing Units	1,274 units	2,548 units	3,823 units
New Retail Space	40,000 ft ²	80,000 ft ²	120,000 ft ²

Additional parameters were applied, relating to each complete community lens. Notable parameters included:

- Housing: assuming a mix of uses and building forms per the land use framework already established in *City Plan* for the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre.
- Transportation: shift in mode split; relocating the transit exchange and increasing transit frequency; proposing new active transportation infrastructure and road connections.
- Access to Daily Needs: new parks and open spaces, a new 90,000 ft² - 150,000 ft² recreational and cultural facility and a new elementary school.
- Infrastructure: Maintaining sewer, water and stormwater capacity and reliability.

Key Findings:

The following outlines the key findings for complete communities' assessment lenses. See maps pertaining to each growth scenario finding in Attachment B.

Transportation:

- *Scenario 1:* Transit access in Woodgrove is concentrated in the west, but major gaps in the walking and cycling networks and long travel or wait times limit convenient access for most residents. Traffic congestion is a significant issue at key intersections, and the area remains heavily car-dependent, with limited progress toward supporting walking, cycling, or transit.
- *Scenario 2:* Relocating the transit exchange and adding new cycling routes greatly improve access to transit and active transportation, especially in central Woodgrove. Traffic flow and intersection performance improve in some areas, but increased traffic

from growth still strains key routes, even as more residents benefit from better walking and cycling connections.

- *Scenario 3:* Further enhancements to walking and cycling infrastructure, along with more frequent transit service, result in the largest improvements to good access to transit by active modes. While traffic at critical intersections remains a challenge, a shift toward lower car use helps reduce overall vehicle volumes despite ongoing development. While traffic at critical intersections remains a challenge, a shift toward lower car use helps reduce overall vehicle volumes despite ongoing development.

Transportation Infrastructure Costing:

High-level costing was conducted for the transportation infrastructure improvements (including new active transportation facilities, roadways, and intersections) assumed for each of the three future scenarios. Overall costs associated with the new transportation infrastructure were estimated to be about \$50 million for Scenario 1, \$100 million for Scenario 2, and \$150 million for Scenario 3. While Scenarios 2 and 3 have higher costs compared to Scenario 1, these scenarios also assume increased growth and development, which provides additional opportunities for funding through development financing tools.

Access to Daily Needs:

- *Scenario 1:* A new pedestrian and cycling link and park and open space at the proposed Bowers District site show slight improvements to residents' ability to access their daily needs. However, gaps persist in the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and a lack of destinations such as parks and open spaces locations, recreation and cultural facility, and a school.
- *Scenario 2:* Relocating the transit exchange, infilling new pedestrian and cycling routes within a 800 metre radius of the exchange, in addition to new destinations such as parks and open spaces, a recreation and cultural facility, and school show large improvements in residents' ability to access their daily needs. However, the lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on the Island Highway demonstrates how important that connection is for basic access and improving the distance and time it takes to access daily needs.
- *Scenario 3:* Infilling all pedestrian and cycling infrastructure throughout the study area, in addition to maintaining key daily needs such as the transit exchange, recreation and culture facility and school show the greatest improvements in residents' ability to access their daily needs. These findings highlight the importance of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and offering a range of daily needs are to the Woodgrove Urban Centre transforming into a complete community.

Infrastructure – Scenarios 1, 2 & 3 Summary:

- *Sanitary Sewer:* As Woodgrove's population grows, the sanitary sewer system will require phased upgrades, with the scale and location of pipe improvements depending on the number and location of new residents. Initial upgrades are planned for Turner Road and Hammond Bay Road at 2,500 additional residents, with further expansions needed for 5,000 and 7,500 residents, eventually requiring regional pipe upgrades at 15,000. The City has identified necessary projects at each stage to prevent system overloads, ensuring infrastructure can support future growth.

Sanitary Sewer Costing: The estimated construction costs for the sewer upgrades are \$2.75 million for Scenario 1 (+2,500 people), \$5.5 million for Scenario 2 (+5,000 people) and \$6 million for Scenario 3 (+7,500 people). These are 2025 figures and do not include inflation. If upgrades aren't done, there could be problems like backups or overflows.

- *Water System:* Across all scenarios, water system upgrades are required to support population growth in Woodgrove. For 2,500 new residents, a new watermain through the Bowers District will ensure adequate supply and fire flow. With 5,000 residents, additional watermain loops and upgrades at several key locations are needed to maintain pressure and flow standards. For 7,500 residents, all previous upgrades plus a new loop from 6700 Island Highway to Portsmouth Road are required, ensuring the system remains effective as demand increases.

Water System Costing: The estimated construction costs for the water system upgrades range from \$1.5 million (for +2,500 people) to over \$7 million (for +7,500 people). These are 2025 figures and do not include inflation. Without these improvements, the system would not be able to provide the required fire flows or maintain minimum water pressures during peak demand, posing risks to both everyday service and emergency response.

- *Stormwater System:* Across all scenarios, stormwater system upgrades are required to manage major storm events.
- *Hydro & Natural Gas:* Across all scenarios, upgrades are required to both hydro and natural gas infrastructure to meet anticipated demand. |

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the Woodgrove Area Plan project are two pronged. First, is to inform the community of the Phase 2 Scenario results and obtain feedback to help inform Phase 3 – Preferred Scenario. Second, is to explore and refine the emerging policies and actions, and to develop a preferred scenario with supporting policies, design guidelines, actions, and monitoring framework. This information will be formulated into a technical document (the *Woodgrove Urban Centre Assessment Report*) to meet the requirements of the Complete Communities grant and the *Woodgrove Area Plan*. The emerging policies and actions include:

Housing:

- Explore policies, actions and incentives that can be used to promote a mix of housing types, rental and ownership tenure options, non-market housing and family friendly bedrooms mixes as recommended in *City Plan* for the Woodgrove Urban Centre.

Access to Daily Needs:

- Explore policies, actions and incentives for supporting a healthy proportion of retailers.
- Explore policies, actions and incentives for supporting a healthy mix of local vs. chain retailers, including promoting smaller retail spaces for independent businesses.
- Explore what a healthy retail vacancy rate range is for the Woodgrove Urban Centre and policies, actions and incentives that can be used to maintain the healthy range.
- Refine the costing, land acquisition and partnership options for the recreation and cultural facility and elementary school.

Transportation:

- Conduct additional investigation to increase capacity at the Nanaimo Parkway / Aulds Road and Island Highway/Turner Road intersections. Any improvements are assumed to not require additional right-of-way (i.e. optimizing signal timings).
- Evaluate whether existing intersections can be retrofitted (i.e. removing split phasing and/or channelized right turns) to better balance the needs of all road users.
- Consider options to improve vehicle access from the Woodgrove area to Highway 19.
- Explore funding models for transportation infrastructure improvements.

Infrastructure:

- Further analysis is not anticipated for infrastructure utilities, as additional analysis will be conducted at time of redevelopment.
- Explore funding models for sanitary sewer, water and stormwater systems improvements.

SUMMARY POINTS

- *Phase 1 – Engagement Summary Report* represents feedback received from 1,200 participants and outlines community priorities, concerns, and aspirations for the Woodgrove Urban Centre.
- *Phase 2 – Scenarios Findings Report* explores the implications of residential and commercial growth in the Woodgrove Urban Centre. Three growth scenarios were assessed to shape the future of Woodgrove as a vibrant, mixed-use complete community.
- The next step in the project is to inform the community of the Phase 2 Scenario results and obtain feedback to help inform Phase 3 – Preferred Scenario and explore and refine the emerging policies and actions.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report

ATTACHMENT B: Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 2: Growth Scenarios Assessment Report |

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