

FOR: COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: January 19, 2026

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY PLANNING

SUBJECT: **WOODGROVE AREA PLAN – PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY & PHASE 3 DRAFT POLICIES, ACTIONS, MONITORING FRAMEWORK & DESIGN GUIDELINES**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present the Woodgrove Area Plan project Phase 2 engagement results and the Phase 3 Policy, Actions, Monitoring Framework and Design Guidelines report 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.

On 2025-JUNE-16, the *Woodgrove Area Plan Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios Assessment Report* was presented to Council for information. The report provided an assessment on the implications three growth scenarios (low, medium and high) may have on the transportation and infrastructure networks, and Woodgrove residents' ability to access their daily needs. It also identified what big moves are needed to achieve the vision of a complete community. The key findings include:

- Access to transit and active transportation is greatly improved with relocating the transit exchange to a central location with the Woodgrove Urban Centre, filling in the gaps in the sidewalk and cycling infrastructure and increasing the frequency of transit service.
- Without an investment in walking, cycling, or transit infrastructure and a shift towards lower car use, traffic at critical intersections will remain a challenge with an increase in growth.
- The cost associated with the new transportation infrastructure upgrades are estimated to be between \$50 million to \$150 million, depending on the growth scenario.
- Resident's ability to access their daily needs is greatly improved when relocating the transit exchange, infilling the gaps in the pedestrian and cycling routes within an 800-metre radius of the exchange, and ensuring a range of daily needs such as parks and open spaces, a recreation and cultural facilities, and school are provided.
- Phased upgrades will be required to the sanitary sewer, water and stormwater systems as Woodgrove's population grows, with the scale and location of pipe improvements depending on the number and location of new residents.
- The cost associated with the new utility infrastructure upgrades are estimated to be between \$2.75 million to \$12.5 million, depending on the growth scenario.

In addition, Phase 2 included obtaining input from the community on the findings as well as priorities and concerns as they relate to the growth scenarios. Those findings are discussed below.

Woodgrove Area Plan Process

The Woodgrove Area Plan project is currently in Phase 3 – Policies, Actions, Monitoring Framework & Design Guidelines. The purpose of Phase 3 is to understand what policies, actions, monitoring framework and design guidelines may be needed to transform the Woodgrove Urban Centre into a complete community. This phase builds on *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* (City Plan) policies, the *Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios Report* and *Phase 2 – Engagement Summary Report*. Phase 3 is intended to inform the policies, actions, monitoring indicators and design guidelines that may comprise the Woodgrove Area Plan. 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 2- Engagement Summary Results

The *Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 2 Engagement Summary* report (see Attachment A) encapsulates the main findings and strategic direction emerging from the second phase of engagement for the Woodgrove Area Plan project. The report summarizes the outreach conducted in June and July 2025, synthesizes the perspectives of 443 participants who were asked broadly for their thoughts on each growth scenario's findings, and what changes they would like to see prioritized in each scenario in terms of transportation, access to daily needs, and infrastructure.

Engagement Process & Participation: Phase 2 engagement included an online survey, virtual workshops and classroom sessions. Much like Phase 1, 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. Outreach efforts included social media, bus posters, a media release, newspaper ads, resulting in high visibility and diverse input.

Key Take Aways:

- Of the three potential growth scenarios, participants were most supportive of Scenario 3, the high growth scenario, which depicted growth for 7,500 residents over the next 30 years.
- Housing:
 - Respondents voiced their concerns about density and development impacts. Some participants see it as necessary to creating a complete community and meeting housing needs, while others fear it will lead to congestion, loss of privacy, and a strain on current infrastructure.
- Transportation & Mobility:
 - Despite actions to promote walking, cycling, and transit, many respondents feel cars remain essential, especially for families, seniors, and those commuting long distances.

- Respondents expressed strong support for integrated mobility systems that connect neighborhoods, commercial hubs, and transit centers.
- Respondents recognize the need for better transit and support upgrades that make it more accessible, frequent, and connected.
- Strong support for intentional cycling & pedestrian infrastructure.
- Strong support for protected crossings, traffic calming measures, and better lighting at intersections to ensure safe routes to schools, parks, and transit stops.
- **Access to Daily Needs:**
 - Strong support for the creation of new parks, natural areas, and re-naturalization zones. As well as integrating green space into urban design.
 - Respondents also express interest in multi-use centers with flexible spaces for classes, performances, and gatherings. As well as desire for public art, plazas, and spaces that reflect local culture and heritage.

Community feedback in addition to the findings of the *Phase 2 – Growth Scenarios Report*, were used to inform Phase 3, proposed policies, actions and monitoring framework.

Phase 3 – Policies, Actions, Monitoring Framework & Design Guidelines

Phase 3 builds on Phases 1 and 2, by developing a road map that can guide the area's evolution, regardless of which growth scenario unfolds. This phase focuses on crafting policy recommendations, identifying strategic actions, establishing a monitoring framework and identifying form and character design guidelines that may inform the final Woodgrove Area Plan. The goal is to ensure the policies, actions and monitoring framework are flexible, and able to adapt to changing conditions, while still advancing the vision of a complete community. The following section provides a summary of the key findings from the *Phase 3 – Draft Policies, Actions, Monitoring Framework and Design Guidelines Report* (Attachment B).

Section 2.0 - Policy Recommendations

Policies have been identified to guide the implementation of the Woodgrove Urban Centre vision and support the creation of a complete community through the four complete community lenses. The following provides an overview of the key policy directions that may inform the Woodgrove Area Plan.

General

- Require a Master Development Plan for all development sites greater than 2.5 hectares (6.18 acres), to provide a finer level of detail for how these sites will be developed.

Housing

- Provide a mix of high and medium density residential developments.
- Promote a balanced mix of rental and ownership units.
- Provide a mix of non-market and market developments.
- Provide diverse unit sizes to accommodate varying household needs.

Transportation

- Shift from auto-centric design to active and public transportation.

- Achieve a mode split target of 76% auto, 16% active, and 8% transit by 2046.
- Relocate the transit exchange to a central location and increase transit service and frequency.
- Expand active transportation infrastructure through new active mobility routes, pedestrian crossings, and pedestrian/cycling amenities.
- Establish a complete road network that includes new roads, traffic calming measures, and optimization of intersections, including signal upgrades.

Access to Daily Needs

- Ensure all Woodgrove residents can access their daily needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle.
- Transition from a standalone retail format to a mixed-use commercial/office with residential above.
- Require a mix of small- and large-scale retail spaces that are ground-oriented and in a format that support residents accessing their daily needs within a 15-minute walk or cycle.
- Support a diverse mix of employment, generating uses such as office, retail, grocery, personal services, dining, hotel, and child care facilities.
- Target commercial and office vacancy rate of 5%, respectively.
- Achieve 20% of land for parks, plazas, trails, recreation and wellness facilities, and other public spaces.
- Provide a mix of private and public multi-functional park and open space, that residents can access within a 5-minute walk.
- Secure medium and small-scale recreation, culture and wellness facilities and new elementary school.

Infrastructure

- Align infrastructure upgrades with development phasing.
- Address capacity constraints in water and sewer systems.
- Integrate green infrastructure and climate-resilient design.
- Trigger service area studies at key development milestones (rezoning, subdivision, development permit, or building permit).

Section 3.0 - Funding Mechanisms

This section of the report outlines the proposed funding sources for servicing requirements that are needed to support the implementation of the Woodgrove Area Plan. These servicing requirements are based on a range of growth scenarios tested in Phase 2, that may occur in the Woodgrove Urban Centre over the next 30 years. The proposed funding sources are based on detailed technical assessments completed as part of the Complete Communities Woodgrove Area Assessment.

The transportation, park and open space, recreation, culture, and utility improvements needed to achieve a complete community, are proposed to be implemented through a combination of fundings sources. These may include private sector development, the City's capital and DCC reserves, capital borrowing, general revenues, utility fees, community amenity contributions, density bonus, and contributions from other levels of government. DCC eligible projects verses those that may be developer driven, have been identified in the report. New Servicing Officer

tools and an Amenity Cost Contribution (ACC) bylaw could in the future also support servicing and amenity needs for the area.

It is important to note that the Transit-Oriented Area (TOA) legislation has limited Council's discretion with respect to height and density when considering zoning land with the TOA. This has impacted the ability to secure amenities, which historically were negotiated through rezonings. To support this shift, the provincial government has introduced an expanded toolkit for financing the necessary infrastructure and amenities to support growth. The new Servicing Officer powers will support securing land necessary to meet transportation and utility infrastructure needs, and the Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) tool could potentially help to secure recreation, culture and wellness facilities in the future.

Section 4.0 - Actions

This section of the report outlines the necessary actions to support the goal of the Woodgrove Urban Centre transformation into a complete community. These actions are designed to inform updates to existing policies and regulations as well as new initiatives. Several of these actions are already included in the *Integrated Action Plan*; however, they are listed in the Phase 3 report to reinforce their importance towards achieving a complete community. Any new actions are intended to be incorporated into the *Integrated Action Plan*.

Section 5.0 – Monitoring

This section of the report outlines the monitoring framework required by the Complete Community grant requirements, to assess the overall progress towards achieving the goal of a complete community. The framework identifies 11 indicators with the general themes being increasing housing diversity, improving multimodal transportation, and enhancing access to daily needs. The monitoring indicators are intended to align with the supportive indicators in the *Monitoring Strategy*.

Section 6.0 – Design Guidelines

The final section of the report outlines the form and character design guidelines to support a compact and diverse urban centre, with its own special character and pulse. The design guidelines are intended to supplement the citywide *Form & Character Design Guidelines*, by providing more detailed guidance on the policy objectives of site, building and street interface design.

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY PLAN

The report is aligned with the following City goals:

- ☒ A Green Nanaimo: Resilient and Regenerative Ecosystems
 - C1.2 Urban Tree Canopy, Natural Areas, & Greenways
 - C1.4 Healthy Watersheds
 - C1.5 Water, Sewer & Stormwater Services]
- ☒ A Connected Nanaimo: Equitable Access and Mobility
 - C2.1 Connected Communities
 - C2.2 Integrated Walk, Roll, Cycle & Transit Network
 - C2.4 Safe Mobility
 - C2.5 Complete Streets

- A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing and Livability
 - C3.1 Affordable Housing
 - C3.2 Intergenerational Living
 - C3.6 Recreation, Culture & Wellness
- An Empowered Nanaimo: Reconciliation, Representation and Inclusion
 - C4.3 Access for All
 - C4.5 Culture
 - C4.9 Parkland & Park Amenity Management
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: Thriving and Resilient Economy
 - C5.1 Economic Capital
 - C5.2 Human, Social, & Environmental Capital
 - C5.5 Place Making & Investment Attraction

The report also aligns with the following City Plan policy sections:

- D4 Future Land Use Designation – Secondary Urban Centre policies
- D5 Mobility Network
- D6 Parks, Recreation, Culture, & Wellness
- E1 Area & Neighbourhood Planning

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The report is aligned with the following Council Strategic Framework priorities:

- Implementing City Plan Action Plans and Key City Management Plans
- Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges
- Maintaining and Growing Current Services
- Capital Projects
- Communicating with the Community
- Governance and Corporate Excellence

NEXT STEPS

There are several next steps in the Woodgrove Area Plan project. They include:

- 1) *Community Engagement*: Engagement on the Phase 3 – Policies, Actions, Monitoring and Framework and Design Guidelines Report is scheduled to take place from January 12th – 25th. Feedback will be sought via a survey and workshops with Woodgrove residents, Dover Neighbourhood Association, the development community, Snuneymuxw First Nation, as well as key government partners. The feedback will then be collated into a Phase 3 – Engagement Summary Report.
- 2) *Final Complete Community Assessment Report*: Per the Complete Community Grant Terms & Conditions, a final assessment report will be submitted by March 31st, 2026. The report will include a summary of the findings and financial expenditures.
- 3) *Woodgrove Area Plan*: The final step in the process will be to draft the Woodgrove Area Plan.

KEY MESSAGES

- *Phase 2 – Engagement Summary Report* summarizes feedback received from over 440 participants and outlines the communities’ priorities for transportation, access to daily needs, and infrastructure.
- *Phase 3 – Policies, Actions, Monitoring Framework & Design Guidelines Report* focuses on identifying what policies, actions and monitoring are needed to move us closer to achieving a complete community in the Woodgrove Urban Centre.
- The next step in the project is to inform the community of the Phase 3 results and obtain feedback to help inform the final Woodgrove Area Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 2 | Engagement Summary Report

ATTACHMENT B: Woodgrove Area Plan: Phase 3 | Policies, Actions, Monitoring Framework & Design Guidelines Report

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