

Nanaimo Major Project Update – September 2011

Below is a list outlining some of the major private and public investments that have been occurring in Nanaimo in the past couple of years, as well as upcoming projects.

Nanaimo Cruise Ship Terminal

In May 2011, the Nanaimo Port Authority opened a new \$25 million floating cruise ship terminal and Welcoming Centre. Partnership funding was provided by the Province of BC, Island Coast Economic Trust, Government of Canada, and the Nanaimo Port Authority.

The cruise berth consisting of a concrete pontoon measuring approximately 350 feet in length by 50 feet wide and having a 7 foot freeboard above the water, was constructed in two parts and joined by a complex cabling system before being towed to its permanent mooring position on the northeast corner of the Nanaimo Assembly Terminal. The pontoon represents approximately 30% of the marine budget for the project, and the berth is designed to handle the largest cruise ships that will operate on the West Coast. As well as being the largest component of the terminal docking system, the concrete pontoons are the largest of their type ever constructed in Western Canada and concrete was chosen for its reliability, durability and lower maintenance requirements. The marine development generated approximately 104,000 man hours of employment and created employment opportunities for the ten contractors that worked on the project.

The uplands project, housing a Canada Border Service Agency inspection facilities, a Welcome Centre and the Port's new corporate offices was completed in time for the first inaugural visit from the Norwegian Pearl on Saturday, May 7, 2011. The Port's five-year goal is to work with the cruise lines to welcome between 30 and 40 cruise ships annually to Nanaimo.

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Nanaimo Harbour Mooring Buoy Project

43 mooring buoys were recently installed as part of a joint project with BC Parks, City of Nanaimo and Snuneymuxw First Nations. The \$110,000 project was paid for by Provincial Tourism Grant funds and a donation from Pacific Yachting. Snuneymuxw First Nation, who operates Newcastle Island Provincial Marine Park, will manage the buoys, which are occupied at a rate of \$12.00 per night.

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Port Place Shopping Centre Redevelopment

The re-development of this downtown shopping centre includes three phases; two of which have been approved by Council. The plan includes the construction of High Street, which will connect Front and Terminal Streets, new commercial space, parking and a landscape plan. Three floors of residential space will be built above the commercial floors, as well as townhouses and apartments along Cameron Road. The third phase, if approved, will entail a high rise tower in the north east section of the property.

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Port of Nanaimo Centre

The new Port of Nanaimo Centre opened in 2008 and includes the New Nanaimo Museum, Shaw Auditorium and state of the art Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC). The VICC was built as part of the City's plan to revitalize downtown, and consists of 38,000 sq. ft. of flexible convention and trade show space. It is centrally located and easily accessible. State of the art technology has been incorporated including full wireless access, digital way-finding and global broadcast capabilities. The VICC can accommodate meetings, conferences and events for up to 1,300 people. The Centre is located in the heart of "old town," adjacent to the harbour on the city block bordered by Commercial Street, Terminal Avenue and Gordon Street. The VICC offers businesses a strategic and first-rate venue for corporate and event organizers to hold conferences in the Harbour City.

Upcoming conferences to note:

City of Nanaimo and Vancouver Island University were successful in their bid to host the 7th International Symposium on Sturgeon, and will welcome the 700 international delegates in July 2013. Detailed proposal can be found here: <http://www.viu.ca/wscs-nac/7thInternationalSymposiumonSturgeon.asp>

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Downtown Waterfront Transportation Hub

Over the next decade, the Nanaimo Port Authority envisions transforming the Assembly Wharf – currently an underused expanse of waterfront – into a community transportation hub that could incorporate ferries, buses, float planes, trains, and cruise ships. The project is a way for the Port Authority to diversify its revenue sources in light of the declining forest industry, and also incorporate the cruise ship terminal into a community wide transportation plan. The Port Authority is in preliminary discussions with several partners in regards to how to best use the space.

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Conference Centre Hotel

The City of Nanaimo owns a fully-serviced vacant lot adjacent to the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. The City will offer incentives to a developer in exchange for a new high-end hotel in the downtown core to accommodate large conference delegations as well as tourists and business travellers. A PKF Hotel Feasibility Study has been commissioned and completed, and confirms that a 150 room full service hotel is viable in Nanaimo. The details of this report will be made available to qualified parties.

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Coast Bastion Inn Renovations

The Coast Bastion Inn, located downtown adjacent to the waterfront walkway, recently underwent \$8 million in renovations to their guestrooms, corridors, elevators, foyer, and second floor conference facilities. The next part to be completed will be the Ballroom.

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Moby Dick Lodge purchased by owners of the Grand Hotel

Waterfront Holdings Ltd., an associate company of the Grand Hotel, is the new owner of the waterfront Moby Dick Lodge and Marina in Nanaimo and plans a significant redevelopment of the 45-room, four-storey lodge including rebranding with a new name and look. Waterfront Inn & Suites will be the only oceanfront accommodation in Nanaimo, located along the Stewart Avenue corridor, and planned investments will be a major contribution to the revitalization of downtown.

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Downtown Living

Residential densification and downtown living has become popular for Nanaimoites in the past few years, with the construction of new residential condo developments such as the 350-unit, 18-storey Pacifica at 38 Front Street, Vivo at 555 Franklyn Street, and Studio NA at 99 Chapel Street. Residents enjoy walking to the waterfront promenade, downtown restaurants, art galleries and shops, and live performance venues such as the Port Theatre. Another draw for some are the spectacular views of the Georgia Strait and Coastal Mountains, as well as the 20-minute floatplane commute to downtown Vancouver. The Pacifica condo project has recently received extensive media coverage in the Real Estate section of the Vancouver Sun.

New Downtown Businesses

New businesses continue to choose downtown because of the extensive public and private improvements completed, planned or underway. Businesses such as A Wee Cupcakery, Red House Market, Tru Spa Institute of Aesthetics are among several new businesses proud to do commerce in the downtown core. New tourism businesses are also popping up in anticipation of an increased flow of cruise ship passengers. Nanaimo Boat Adventures at the Nanaimo Boat Basin and Alberni Outpost's adventure centre on Newcastle Island are among those businesses.

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Maffeo Sutton Park Redevelopment

The new downtown Spirit Square, created with \$500,000 of Provincial funds, officially opened on Canada Day, 2009. This community gathering space is located near the entrance to the park adjacent to Cliff Street and covers approximately one quarter of the park site. It provides a large multi-purpose place for special event use, enhanced park access and improved routes for pedestrians, cyclists, the physically challenged, as well as serve and emergency vehicles. A structure is the focus of the plaza and will feature interpretive information about the history of the site and downtown. This initial development included underground infrastructure required for future development of the entire park, including water, sewer, draining and electrical infrastructure. The Phase 1 Spirit Square project was Phase 1 of an overall Maffeo Sutton Park improvement plan that is striving to enhance this destination urban waterfront park. Design work for Phase 2 of the improvement plan, a new washroom and amenity building, began in fall 2009 and is expected to be implemented starting in 2011.

Great Canadian Casino Expansion

The Great Canadian Gaming Corporation plans to expand and renovate its Nanaimo casino, at a cost of \$30 million. The project has received the initial go-ahead from City Council, but has been put on hold for the time-being, although the Gaming Corp. remains committed to Nanaimo.

BC Ferries Terminal and Vessel Upgrades

BC Ferries completed a major \$40.7 million renovation at its aging Departure Bay terminal in 2008, which included a new foot passenger building and parking for 835 vehicles, up from 550. It has also invested \$16 million into renovations at the Gabriola ferry terminal and upgrades to the Quinsam ferry. As well, three new Super C Class ferries have been added to its fleet operating from Nanaimo.

Diana Krall (Harbourfront Plaza) Plaza Plan

In spring 2007, the City of Nanaimo and Downtown Nanaimo Partnership began a Diana Krall Plaza improvement process. This improvement planning involved many stakeholders and special event group interviews, as well as a public open house. Improvements were focused on creating an attractive, safe and vibrant downtown plaza that interfaces well with adjacent facilities and visually links to the waterfront walkway, Vancouver Island Conference Centre, surrounding businesses and amenities and the downtown commercial core. Phase 1 of the project is now complete. Seating will be improved in the plaza in 2010 with movable tables, chairs and umbrellas.

E&N Railway Station Reconstruction

Following the 2007 fire that damaged the historical 1920's E&N Station, the Young Professionals of Nanaimo have spearheaded a restoration project in partnership with the Island Corridor Foundation and Downtown Nanaimo Business Improvement Area. This entails fixing the building's foundation and restoring the exterior, as well as rehabilitating the station's interior spaces to a modern standard and including new commercial spaces. The partnership hopes that once rehabilitated, the Nanaimo Train Station will reclaim its role as a transportation hub and economic driver for both Nanaimo and Vancouver Island. Restoration efforts are expected to be complete by July 2011.

VIA Rail's ticket office will occupy 20% of the space, and a tenant has been confirmed for the remaining 80%. Trevor & Jane Ivens from the Fox & Hounds English pub in Nanaimo will restore the inside of the train station and convert it into a traditional Irish pub-style restaurant by the end of this year.

A proposal is also in to improve commuter rail service. The proposed schedule will travel south from Nanaimo to Victoria at 6 am, returning North to Courtenay, back to Victoria, with its final stop at 6 pm in Nanaimo.

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Island Corridor Foundation Main Terminus Moving to Nanaimo

Plans have been announced to relocate the E&N Rail service's main terminus from Victoria to Nanaimo by the spring of 2011, and have a Dayliner passenger train travelling south from Nanaimo early each morning, and returning to Nanaimo in the evening. The plan will allow for potential commuter traffic into Victoria, as well as train tourism and freight transportation. This is part of the Island Corridor Foundation's planning strategy to upgrade the entire 289-kilometre rail corridor.

Nanaimo Airport Improvements

Nanaimo Airport improvements were completed at a cost of \$26.8M in July 2011. This included a 2,400-foot taxiway extension for a total runway length of 6,600 feet, high-intensity lighting, lead-in lights and an instrument landing system, a terminal building expansion, parking lot expansion, and wastewater treatment plant. The Airport can now accommodate 737-700W aircraft. Improvements will allow the airport to attract more carriers and offer more destinations to mid-Island travellers and commercial enterprises. These projects, conducted in two phases, have been supported by funding from the Government of Canada, Province of British Columbia, the Island Coastal Economic Trust and the NAC to a total of \$26.8 million.

Phase 1 (2007 to 2010)

- (a) 1,600 foot runway extension,
- (b) 2,400 foot taxi-way,
- (c) high intensity runway lights,
- (d) lead-in lights,
- (e) Flight path protection

Phase 2 (2010 to 2011)

- (a) enlarged terminal building,
- (b) apron improvements,
- (c) additional parking area,
- (d) new maintenance building (CSB), enhanced sewer and water treatment.

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VIU Campus Master Plan

A new 50-year Campus Master Plan has been developed for Vancouver Island University. Student enrolment continues to increase, and was up 14% in 2010. The anticipated growth of VIU over the long run has led surrounding area to renovate and revitalize including the redevelopment of the old Harewood Mall, now rebranded as the University Village Plaza. The Master Plan includes many infrastructure improvements in the 5-year, 10-year, and 20 to 50-year phases.

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Sandstone Town Centre

Island Wolf Properties, a joint venture between Snuneymuxw First Nation and Northwest Properties, has received City Council approval for the 290-hectare Sandstone development, a 15-20 year build-out including 2,400 new homes as well as major commercial and light industrial spaces in the city's south end. Sandstone is also exploring the opportunity to build an Eco Industrial Park that would cluster 'green' businesses who will be powered by waste-to-energy technology, capturing the heat currently being lost to the atmosphere in the adjacent Nanaimo Regional District's adjacent solid waste management facility. The development Master Plan was approved as an amendment to the City's Official Community Plan in November of 2009. The next stage in the approvals process is a Phased Development Agreement and Zoning Bylaw amendment, pending applicant submission.

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Insight Developments' "Seawalk" Waterfront Condos

The City of Nanaimo previously issued a development permit to Insight Holdings for a new \$27.4 million highrise consisting of 82 residential units plus 1 guest suite in a 26-storey building at 10&20 Front Street, along the waterfront in downtown Nanaimo, along with a \$5.6 million, 122-spot parking garage. This application was received in 2008 but because of market conditions, the project was put on hold. All City approvals are in place, in principal, but have to go through the renewal process once the developer is ready to resume the project.

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Oceanview Golf Resort & Spa

Oceanview Golf Resort & Spa will feature a world-class 18-hole signature golf course, clubhouse and pro shop; boutique hotel and wellness spa facility; and a first-class marina with up to 600 slips. A mix of 2,700 single family residences and villas, townhouses, condominiums and seniors' housing will appeal to people in different family types, life stages, and levels of income. The Oceanview community will have the infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit, in addition to driving. The golf course will feature modern water preservation and recirculation methods. Only organic-based products as well as an integrated pest management system will be used on the course. Land use designation was changed from Industrial to Resort Centre in 2009, and development Master Plan was approved as an amendment to the City's Official Community Plan in February 2010. The next stage in the approvals process is a Phased Development Agreement and Zoning Bylaw amendment, pending applicant submission.

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Nanaimo Regional General Hospital Emergency Room Expansion

The \$36.9 million ER expansion is scheduled to open in the fall of 2012. Nanaimo and District Hospital Foundation has committed \$4 million to the project, with the rest coming from government funding. The new emergency department will feature a revolutionary design and will meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standards. Geothermal energy will be used to heat and cool the air coming into the building. Underground, concrete tunnels will have barrels of water that will maintain the temperature of the earth, which will be warmer than the cold air in the winter and cooler than the hot air in the summer.

Post renovation, the 963 square metre emergency department will be expanded to 2,300 square metres with the number of treatment rooms to be increased from 24 to 41. The new department will be designed to provide more space and improve traffic flow. Ambulatory care units will triple from four to 12 and psychiatric emergency care will also increase from current closet-size single room to a full section with an intensive care unit.

Construction on the new emergency department has been underway since mid-2010 with an expected completion by 2012.

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\$45 Million Water Treatment Plant

A joint federal-provincial investment of over \$17.8 million will help fund the new South Fork Water Treatment Plant, improving the quality of local drinking water for nearly 80,000 Nanaimo-area residents. This investment will fund the construction of a new drinking water treatment plant on Nanaimo Lakes Road that will include ultra-violet disinfection and filtration processes. The plant, which will provide clean drinking water to the City of Nanaimo, South West Extension, and the Snuneymuxw First Nation, will be built to LEED Gold standards. The total direct construction cost is an estimated \$45 million, with the Province and the federal government each providing \$8.9 million and the City of Nanaimo providing the balance of funding.

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Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre Cogeneration (GNPCC) Project

This recently completed cogeneration project will use the waste gases at the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) sewage treatment plant to produce electricity and is the first of its kind in Canada at a facility of its size. Previously, about 60% of the gases produced were flared, or wasted. Now, the facility is expected to produce about 335 kilowatts of power daily, enough for more than 300 homes. This energy will be used to help the facility meet its electricity demands, and the excess will be sold to the provincial commercial power grid. The total cost of \$2.95 million was shared between the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the RDN.

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Cedar Road LFG Inc.

In 2007 the Regional District of Nanaimo sold emission rights for the approx. 25,000 tonnes of waste gas produced annually at the Cedar landfill to Cedar Road LFG to produce electricity at its Nanaimo facility. This Independent Power Producer has the mandate to advance and lead demonstration and development in the bioenergy sector. The \$3.6 million, 1.3 megawatt power plant is the first of its kind in Canada to utilize methane from a small-medium sized landfill for sale to the electricity grid and potentially for thermal heating or transportation fuel. The center is a leader in new utilization technologies and processes used for clean energy alternatives in domestic and export markets.

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City Hall Annex Replacement

Another publicly-funded project underway is the city hall annex replacement. The \$15.7-million, 43,000 square foot building will be constructed to LEEDS Gold standard and will sit across from city hall on Dunsmuir Street. Construction will begin September 2011 with a completion date set for the fall of 2012.

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International Centre for Sturgeon Studies

Vancouver Island University (VIU) will put the finishing touches on a new International Centre for Sturgeon Studies (ICSS), the first of its kind in North America, thanks to federal funding announced in September, 2011. An investment of \$717,700 is being provided through the Western Diversification Program towards the centre's completion. This latest funding is being used to equip the 1208 m² (13,000 ft²) ICSS with an electrical generator, furniture and freshwater recirculation system, as well as other necessary components. The centre's official grand opening is set for October 3, 2011. Through ICSS, VIU will strengthen the knowledge and technological expertise needed to develop a BC sturgeon aquaculture industry. Sturgeon is a highly valued species and success of the overall project will have positive implications for remote coastal communities. Dr. David Witty, Vice President Academic and Provost, speaking on behalf of VIU President Dr. Ralph Nilson, highlighted the importance of having well equipped research and innovation facilities like the ICSS to enhance student learning experiences and ensure high quality applied research. "The vision for the ICSS is to become the knowledge and innovation hub supporting the development of a sustainable sturgeon aquaculture industry in BC," added ICSS Director, Don Tillapaugh. "This summer we hosted 121 delegates from as far away as China and Russia, establishing a global network and putting VIU firmly on the sturgeon research map." Western Economic Diversification Canada works with the provinces, industry associations and communities to promote the development and diversification of the western economy, coordinates federal economic activities in the West and advances the interests of western Canadians in national decision making.

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