

# CITY PLAN

NANAIMO REIMAGINED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


MAY 2022



CITY OF NANAIMO  
THE HARBOUR CITY







Welcome Pole in  
Maffeo Sutton Park,  
by Snuneymuxw  
Master Carver  
Noel Brown

# TERRITORIAL / LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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We respectfully acknowledge that the city boundary lies within the Traditional Territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation who have many significant ancestral village sites throughout the city including Stilnup (Departure Bay) and Sxwuyum (Millstone River). We recognize the Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854, a trade and commerce treaty that forever and always preserves and protects Snuneymuxw villages, waters, enclosed fields, harvesting and gathering sites, and the right to hunt and fish as formerly.

# Welcome to *City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged.*

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*City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* reflects the ideas and opinions of thousands of people who contributed their time and energy over two years, despite the effects and restrictions of a global pandemic. Innovative, extensive, and inclusive, the community consultation – called REIMAGINE NANAIMO – set a new standard for public engagement in Vancouver Island’s second largest city.

Nanaimo’s vision of its future is based on a sustainability model called Doughnut Economics. This model describes a “sweet spot” when planning for a community where people can meet their needs within the limits of social foundations and environmental capacity.

*City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* adopts the Doughnut Economics model as a framework for achieving its vision and articulates its focus through five goals. These Five City Goals provide the organizing structure for policies and will guide the measurement and monitoring of progress in achieving the city’s vision over the coming 25 years. *City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* is an *Official Community Plan* (OCP), but with a layered approach that integrates multiple plans under a sustainability framework adopted for Nanaimo’s unique needs.

In addition to serving as Nanaimo’s OCP, *City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* also provides direction on Truth and Reconciliation, climate adaptation, economic prosperity, health, accessibility, diversity, and more. This approach recognizes the relationships between land use and plans for Parks, Recreation, and Culture; Active Mobility; Transportation; Climate Action and Resiliency; and Accessibility and Inclusion.

The high level and long term perspective of *City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* allows for adaptation along the way. How and when the actions and policies described in this plan come to fruition is the work of City Council, and will evolve as community priorities shift over time.

A separate, companion *Monitoring Strategy* will be developed that recommends metrics, targets, and reporting periods to track the city’s progress annually, with a review and update of the plan every five years. Future City Councils will have the option to amend *City Plan – Nanaimo Relmaged* as circumstances change, recognizing the overarching vision, goals, and policies developed through community collaboration and Council approval.

*City Plan* is designed for a broad audience, including the many, many residents who helped to create a plan to make the most of the home they love. To everyone who helped reimagine Nanaimo, the City offers a heartfelt thank you.

# ABOUT CITY PLAN: NANAIMO REIMAGINED

Great cities aren't created by accident. They are created through thoughtful plans and a desire by the many who live there to make great choices. *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* (“City Plan”) is our guide for how we will get to our future Nanaimo – a city that has the benefits we enjoy today combined with new opportunities.

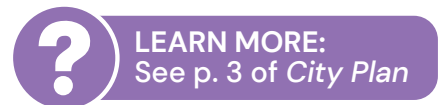
Currently the second largest city on Vancouver Island, Nanaimo is growing and changing. More people are choosing to raise families, work, retire, and enjoy our city's natural and cultural amenities. How the City addresses growth, while meeting its economic, social, cultural, and environmental objectives is the purpose of *City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined*.

*City Plan* provides strategic direction for the coming 25 years on land use, Truth and Reconciliation, climate adaptation, health and wellness, diversity, accessibility and inclusion, economic prosperity, sustainable living, and more.

Because cities work best when interdependent systems are considered together, *City Plan* unifies traditionally separate strategic documents to serve as Nanaimo's:

- ▶ Official Community Plan (OCP)
- ▶ Parks, Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Plan
- ▶ Active Mobility Plan
- ▶ Transportation Plan
- ▶ Climate Action & Resiliency Plan
- ▶ Accessibility & Inclusion Plan

Official Community Plans (OCP) are governed by the *Local Government Act* (LGA). To become an Official Community Plan, *City Plan* must be adopted by City Council as a bylaw. While a Council is not obligated to undertake specific actions or projects in an OCP, all bylaws enacted or works undertaken by Council must be consistent with the plan.



## OUR FRAMEWORK AND GOALS

To strategize how we will welcome 40,000 new residents over the next 25 years, Nanaimo has looked to the Doughnut Economics model. This model, created by Kate Raworth, articulates the fundamental need to meet human needs, our “social foundations,” within the limits of our environment, the “ecological ceiling.” The Nanaimo Doughnut is our city's adaptation of this global framework, and describes the “sweet spot” that *City Plan* seeks to achieve.

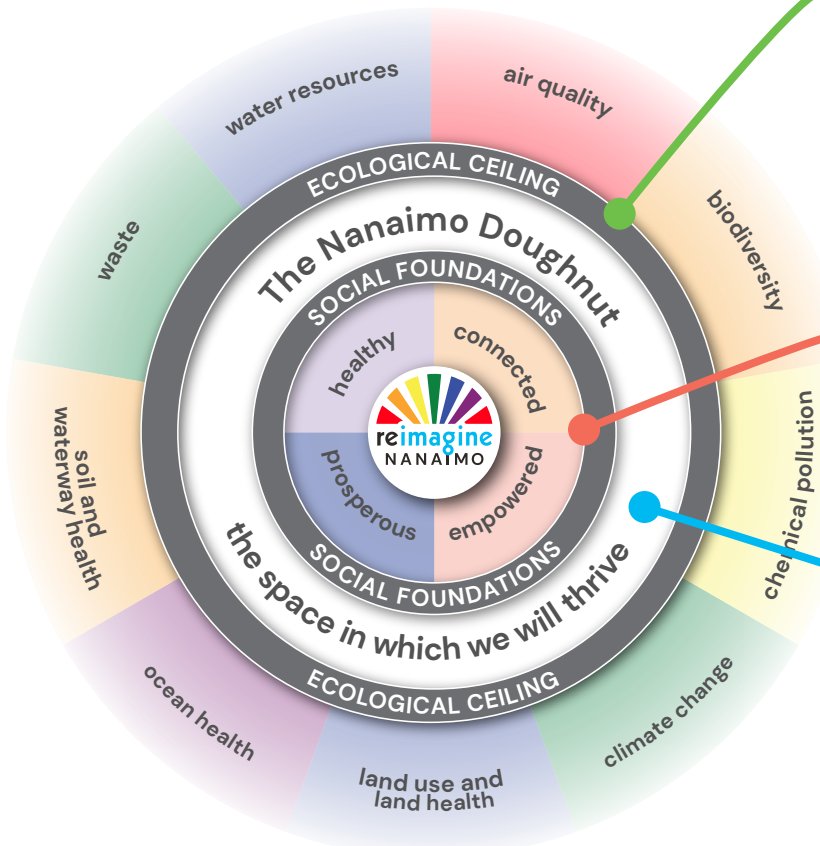
Five City Goals, organized around the framework of the Nanaimo Doughnut, represent the five areas of focus for our city's future. Together, they are meant to guide a balanced approach to achieving our desired future. The Five City Goals provide the organizing structure for policies in *City Plan*.





# The Nanaimo Doughnut Framework

Based on the Doughnut Economics theory created by Kate Raworth



## The Outer Circle – Ecological Ceiling

- ▶ Living within our means
- ▶ Minimizing the harm we do to the natural environment
- ▶ Maximizing the amount of ecological benefit we give back

## The Inner Circle – Social Foundations

- ▶ Addressing shortfalls and meeting needs
- ▶ Creating opportunity for all

## The Centre – Our Aim

- ▶ The “sweet spot” where we are meeting the needs of all, while respecting the limits of our environment
- ▶ Where we will thrive

### Five City Goals



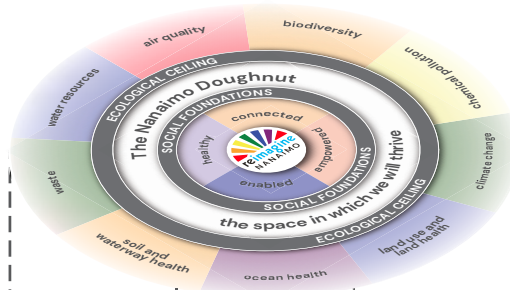
-  **A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS**  
*City Plan Section C1, page 22*
-  **A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY**  
*City Plan Section C2, page 50*
-  **A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY**  
*City Plan Section C3, page 66*
-  **AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: RECONCILIATION, REPRESENTATION & INCLUSION**  
*City Plan Section C4, page 90*
-  **A PROSPEROUS NANAIMO: THRIVING & RESILIENT ECONOMY**  
*City Plan Section C5, page 124*

# HOW IT FITS TOGETHER

*City Plan - Nanaimo Reimagined* combines existing policies and actions, incorporates new information, and lays a groundwork for a future of ongoing integration. Below are the elements that form *City Plan*.

The **Nanaimo Doughnut** is our framework. It articulates the interconnectivity between all aspects of our city and defines the space in which Nanaimo will thrive.

*City Plan Section B1.1, page 14*

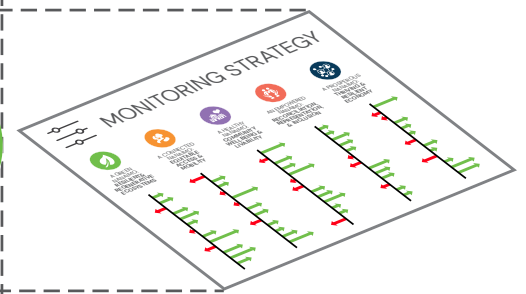
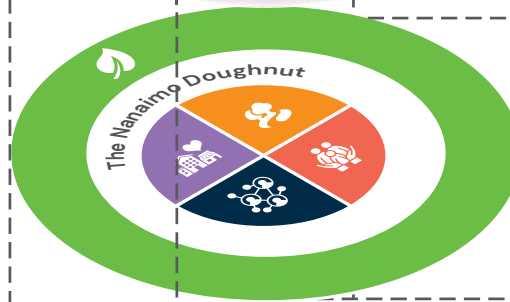


**Monitoring**, located in a separate *Monitoring Strategy* document, will identify indicators that will be tracked to see progress towards the goals of *City Plan*.

*Monitoring Strategy*

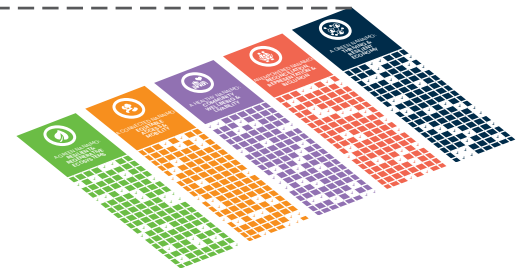
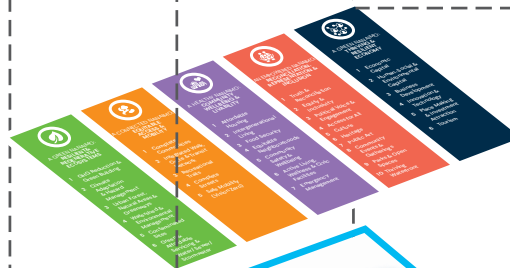
The **Five City Goals** represent the five areas of focus for our city's future and how we organize our policies.

*City Plan Section B2.1, page 16*



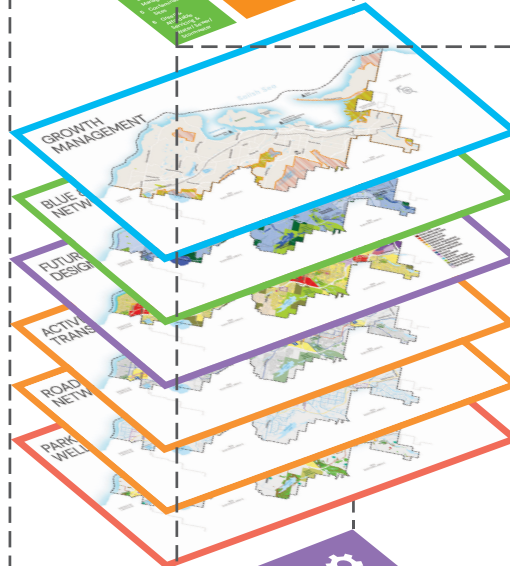
Our **Policies** translate Nanaimo's goals into strategic directions that communicate our intentions and commitments for guiding future choices.

*City Plan Part C, page 19*



Our **City Structure** is our physical growth plan that puts our framework and goals into action. It outlines how and where things will change and where they will stay the same in the future.

*City Plan Part D, page 139*

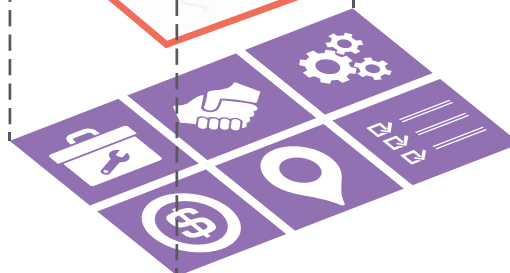


Our **Actions**, located in a separate *Integrated Action Plan* document, will provide specific projects and programs to implement *City Plan*.

*Integrated Action Plan*

**Taking Action** outlines details on development permit areas, building relationships, financial considerations, and what comes next.

*City Plan Part E, page 221*





Celebrate what you've accomplished, but raise the bar a little higher each time you succeed.

– Mia Hamm



## POLICY AREAS

*City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* includes 35 policy areas, organized around the Five City Goals. Each policy area communicates the values that will guide the choices we will make as our city grows and evolves. These policies reflect matters of great importance to Nanaimo residents and are based on the values community members have articulated. These policies are important, because we know our city is going to change and decisions will need to be made. Our policies will keep us grounded, allowing us to work together to translate Nanaimo's values into meaningful actions that create the kind of city that respects our past and prepares us for the future.



**LEARN MORE:**  
See pp. 19–137 of *City Plan*

# POLICIES

Through *City Plan - Nanaimo Reimagined*, the community identified values of importance to residents, both for today and as we move into the next phase of our evolution as a city. These values have informed the Five City Goals, along with policies that will guide how we make progress and assess choices.

## 12 COMMUNITY INPUT THEMES



### Access to Nature & Outdoor Recreation

We value our green spaces and love being minutes away from nature and places to play outdoors. Preserving this access for the future is essential.



### Central Hub Identity

We are excited about our role as the Central Hub of Vancouver Island and wish to build on this identity.



### Livable Neighbourhoods

We value our existing neighbourhoods and the balance of urban and residential areas. We wish to maintain the character of neighbourhoods, while accommodating a diverse range of residents.



### A Waterfront Identity

Waterfronts are part of who we are, and we want more opportunities to connect with and celebrate these special areas.



### City Living

We are embracing a shift from more suburban to urban living, and are excited about the culture, entertainment, and services this is bringing. We want to ensure this transition is thoughtful, with attention to place making and character.



### A Thriving & Creative Downtown

We want to see Downtown continue to evolve into the vibrant, engaging centre for arts, culture, entertainment, tourism, business, and jobs that has been envisioned over the years.



### A Green Approach

We want Nanaimo to be a climate leader, making choices that will reduce our impacts, protect our natural assets, and position us for a greener future. However, we recognize that changing our behaviours will take effort from everyone.



### Mobility Choice

We would like more options for getting around the city easily by walking, rolling, cycling, or taking transit, but we also are coming to terms with reducing our reliance on automobiles.



### Supportive City

We are worried about the social challenges our community is facing and wish to help all people live healthier, happier lives, while keeping our city feeling safe and welcoming.



### Inclusive & Equitable

We want to respect and respond to the perspectives, values, and needs of all individuals and groups in Nanaimo and create spaces and programs for everyone.



### Affordable City

We are concerned about the rising costs of living and are seeking ways to make it possible for people of all socio-economic backgrounds to thrive here.



### Great Jobs & Businesses

We want to attract and maintain great businesses and institutions that provide quality jobs so we can have fulfilling employment close to home.




City Plan organizes and communicates broad, city scale policies to guide decision making to reach our goals. An *Integrated Action Plan* (separate document) will provide specific actions to put change into motion.

## 5 CITY GOALS

 <p><b>A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT &amp; REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS</b></p>	 <p><b>A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS &amp; MOBILITY</b></p>	 <p><b>A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING &amp; LIVABILITY</b></p>	 <p><b>AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: RECONCILIATION, REPRESENTATION &amp; INCLUSION</b></p>	 <p><b>A PROSPEROUS NANAIMO: THRIVING &amp; RESILIENT ECONOMY</b></p>
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## 35 CITY PLAN POLICY TOPIC AREAS

<p><b>C1.1</b> Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction <i>City Plan p. 28</i></p> <p><b>C1.2</b> Climate Adaptation &amp; Hazard Mitigation <i>City Plan p. 34</i></p> <p><b>C1.3</b> Urban Tree Canopy, Natural Areas, &amp; Greenways <i>City Plan p. 36</i></p> <p><b>C1.4</b> Healthy Watersheds <i>City Plan p. 39</i></p> <p><b>C1.5</b> Water, Sewer, &amp; Stormwater Services <i>City Plan p. 41</i></p> <p><b>C1.6</b> Solid Waste Management <i>City Plan p. 44</i></p> <p><b>C1.7</b> Brownfield Sites <i>City Plan p. 46</i></p> <p><b>C1.8</b> Artificial Lighting &amp; Dark Skies <i>City Plan p. 47</i></p>	<p><b>C2.1</b> Connected Communities <i>City Plan p. 56</i></p> <p><b>C2.2</b> Integrated Walk, Roll, Cycle, &amp; Transit Network <i>City Plan p. 58</i></p> <p><b>C2.3</b> Recreational Trails <i>City Plan p. 61</i></p> <p><b>C2.4</b> Safe Mobility (Vision Zero) <i>City Plan p. 63</i></p> <p><b>C2.5</b> Complete Streets <i>City Plan p. 64</i></p>	<p><b>C3.1</b> Community Safety &amp; Security <i>City Plan p. 72</i></p> <p><b>C3.2</b> Affordable Housing <i>City Plan p. 75</i></p> <p><b>C3.3</b> Intergenerational Living <i>City Plan p. 79</i></p> <p><b>C3.4</b> Food Security <i>City Plan p. 83</i></p> <p><b>C3.5</b> Emergency Management <i>City Plan p. 83</i></p> <p><b>C3.6</b> Recreation, Culture, &amp; Wellness <i>City Plan p. 85</i></p>	<p><b>C4.1</b> Truth &amp; Reconciliation <i>City Plan p. 97</i></p> <p><b>C4.2</b> Equity &amp; Inclusivity <i>Plan p. 101</i></p> <p><b>C4.3</b> Access for All <i>City Plan p. 103</i></p> <p><b>C4.4</b> Political Voice &amp; Engagement <i>City Plan p. 106</i></p> <p><b>C4.5</b> Culture <i>City Plan p. 108</i></p> <p><b>C4.6</b> Archaeology &amp; Heritage <i>City Plan p. 110</i></p> <p><b>C4.7</b> Public Art Projects &amp; Programs <i>City Plan p. 113</i></p> <p><b>C4.8</b> Community Events, Festivals, Tournaments, &amp; Gatherings <i>City Plan p. 115</i></p> <p><b>C4.9</b> Parkland &amp; Park Amenity Management <i>City Plan p. 117</i></p> <p><b>C4.10</b> Waterfront Use &amp; Protection <i>City Plan p. 121</i></p>	<p><b>C5.1</b> Economic Capital <i>City Plan p. 130</i></p> <p><b>C5.2</b> Human, Social, &amp; Environmental Capital <i>City Plan p. 132</i></p> <p><b>C5.3</b> Business Development <i>City Plan p. 133</i></p> <p><b>C5.4</b> Innovation &amp; Technology <i>City Plan p. 134</i></p> <p><b>C5.5</b> Place Making &amp; Investment Attraction <i>City Plan p. 135</i></p> <p><b>C5.6</b> Tourism <i>City Plan p. 137</i></p>
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You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.

– Alvin Toffler

## CITY STRUCTURE

Our City Structure is our physical growth plan that puts our framework and goals into action. As we plan for an additional 40,000 people to come to Nanaimo in the next 25 years, we need to consider where they will live and work, how they will get around, where they will have fun, and how we can allow growth, while at the same time continuing to support our blue and green networks in an increasingly urban environment. By creating an integrated city-wide system that layers five key networks – Growth Management; the Blue & Green Network; Future Land Use Designations; the Mobility Network; and the Parks, Recreation, Culture & Wellness Plan – we are able to harmonize and create efficiency in our city.



**LEARN MORE:**  
See pp. 139–218 of *City Plan*



# CONCEPTUAL CITY STRUCTURE LAYERS

## FIVE LAYERS

**Growth Management** is how we separate urban and rural areas, helping to focus growth in a way that creates complete communities, while protecting sensitive natural areas and productive lands.

[City Plan Section D2, page 152](#)

The **Blue & Green Network** provides places for nature to thrive. The network includes both urban and natural areas and provides spaces that connect Nanaimo to the natural landscapes beyond.

[City Plan Section D3, page 156](#)

The **Future Land Use Designations** guide how and where we will focus places for living, working, and experiencing Nanaimo. It is how we allocate space within the city to create a vibrant and sustainable mix of uses.

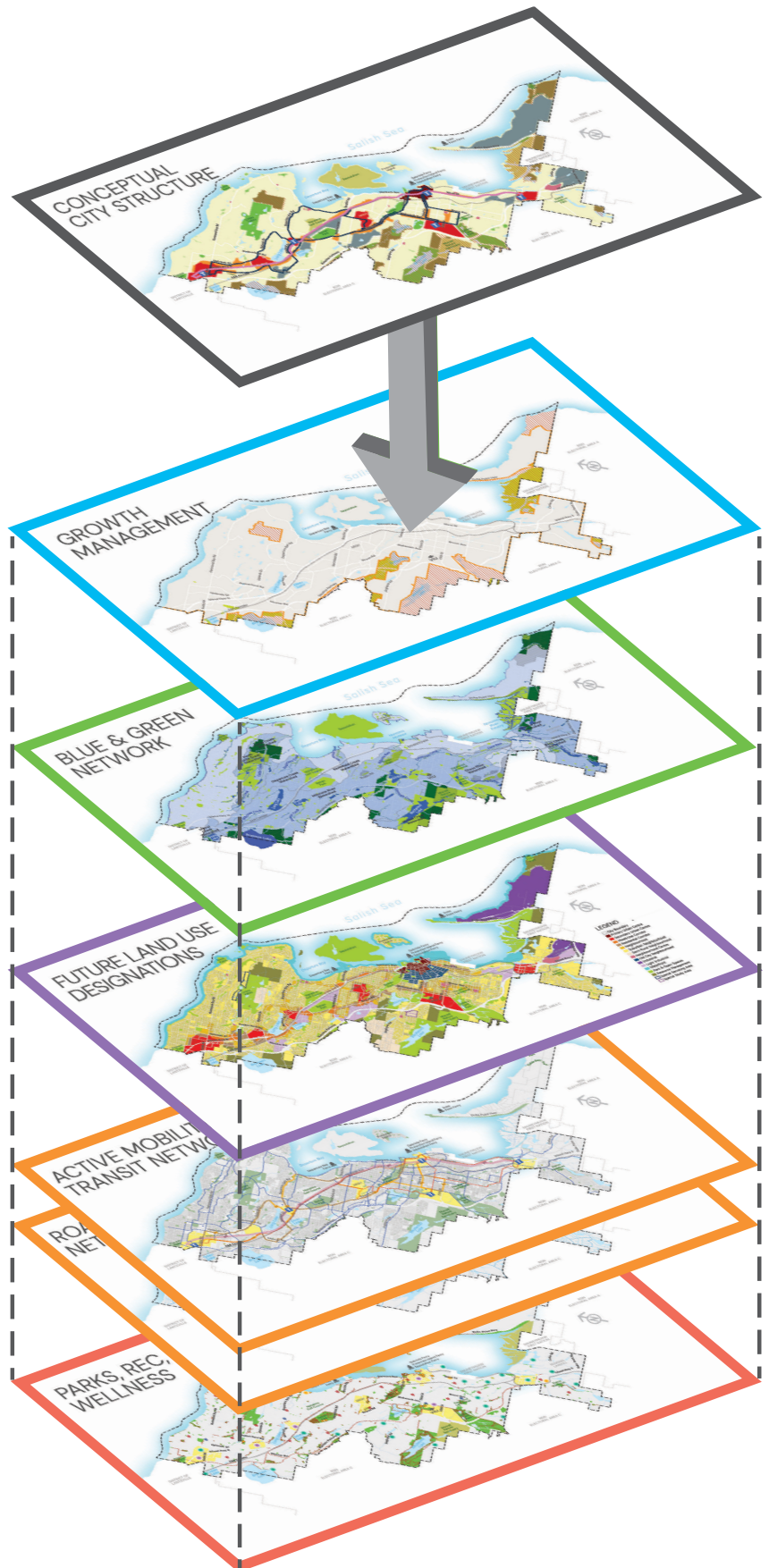
[City Plan Section D4, page 162](#)

The **Mobility Network** indicates how we will meet the transportation needs of an increasing population and shift to a network that prioritizes a broad range of sustainable transportation options.

[City Plan Section D5, page 204](#)

The **Parks, Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Plan** indicates where we will invest in growing critical amenities that support our community wellbeing and quality of life.

[City Plan Section D6, page 214](#)



# AN INTEGRATED CITY STRUCTURE

The conceptual city structure illustrates, at a high-level, how integrated plans apply across the city to achieve the Five City Goals and align with the Nanaimo Doughnut framework. The diagram below is illustrative, providing an overview of how key elements of *City Plan* fit together. It is not intended for official planning purposes. Each layer is described in more detail in *City Plan*. Refer to the *City Plan Schedules* for official maps.

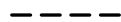

## Conceptual City Structure

Map is for illustrative purposes only. Refer to the Schedules for official maps on each component of the integrated plan.

## Legend



### GROWTH MANAGEMENT

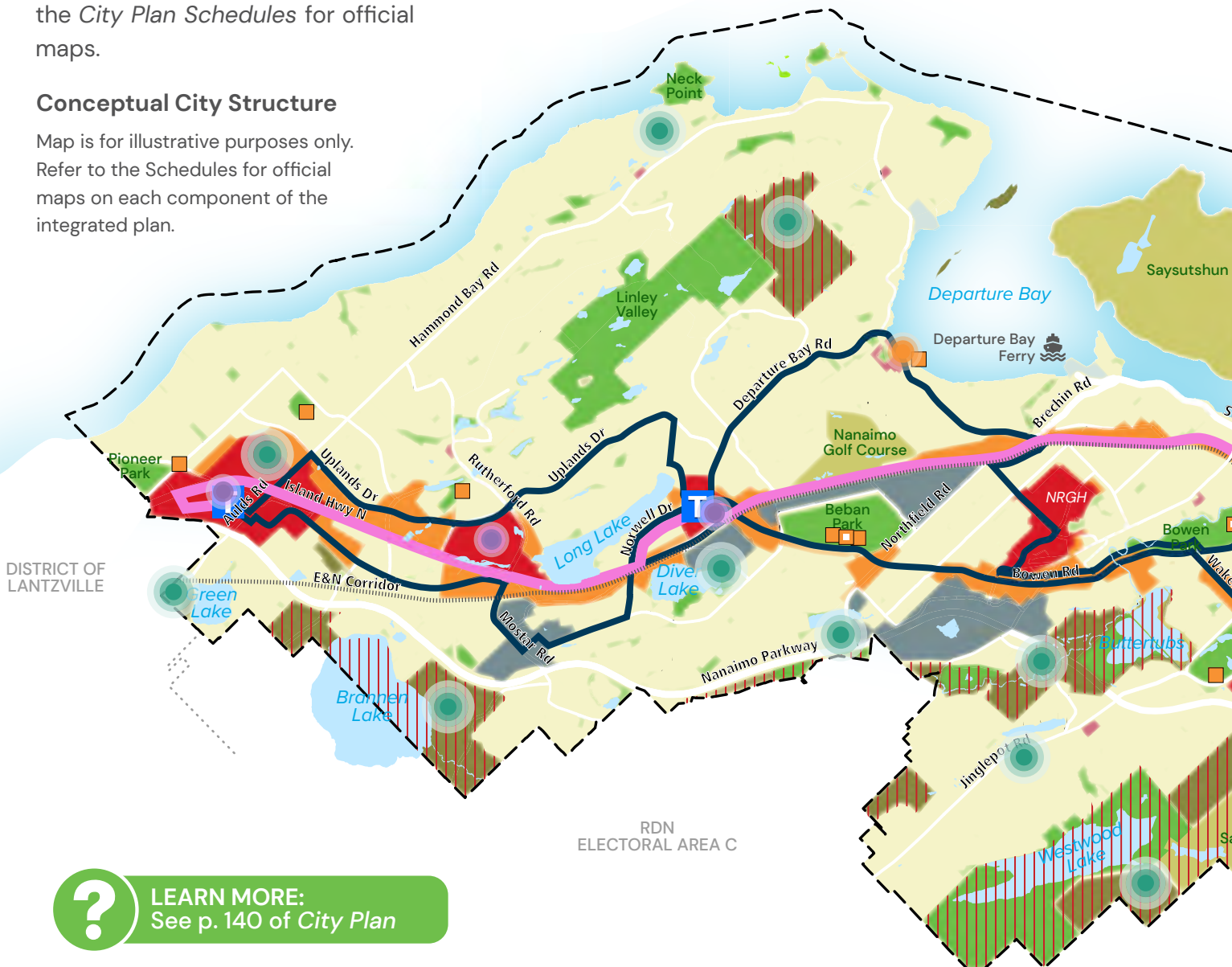
*City Plan Section D2, p. 152*

-  City of Nanaimo Boundary
-  Lands Outside Urban Containment Boundary (UCB)

### BLUE & GREEN NETWORK

*City Plan Section D3, p. 156*







-  Water Bodies / Streams
-  Resource Management Area



 **LEARN MORE:**  
See p. 140 of *City Plan*




## FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

City Plan Section D4, p. 162

-  Primary Urban Centre / Highest Density Area
-  Secondary Urban Centre / High Density Area
-  Corridor / Moderate Density Area
-  Neighbourhood Centre / Moderate to Low Density Area
-  Lowest Density Residential Area
-  Industrial / Employment Area





## MOBILITY NETWORK

City Plan Section D5, p. 204

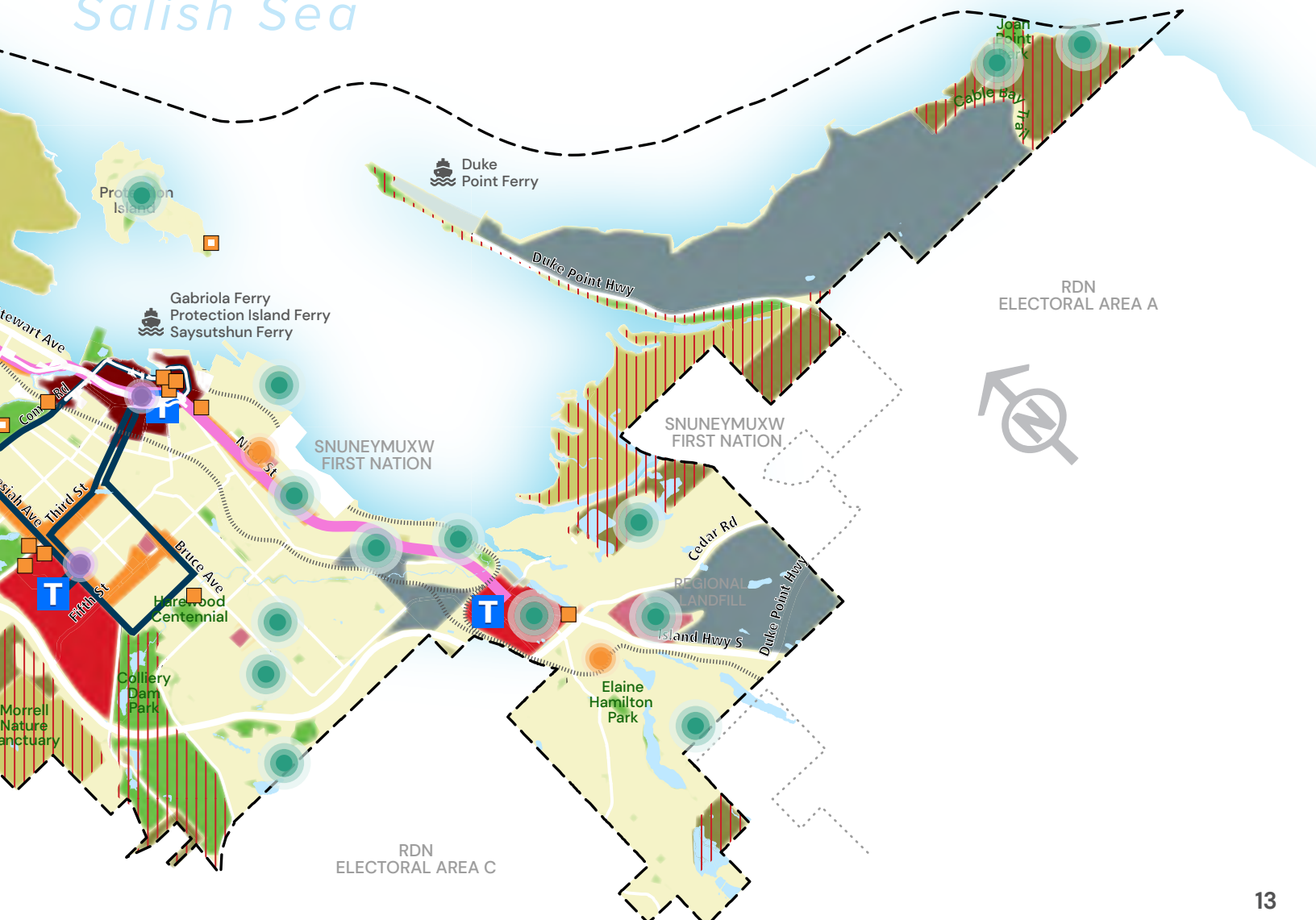
-  Future Transit Exchange
-  Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line
-  Bus Frequent Transit (BFT) Line

## PARKS, REC, CULTURE, & WELLNESS PLAN

City Plan Section D6, p. 214

-  Existing City owned Parks
-  Existing Parks & Open Space owned by Others
-  Existing Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Facility
-  Future Upgraded Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Facility
-  New Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Facility Priority Area
-  New Urban Centre Park, Recreation, Culture, & Wellness Priority Area
-  New Park or Amenity Space Priority Area

Salish Sea

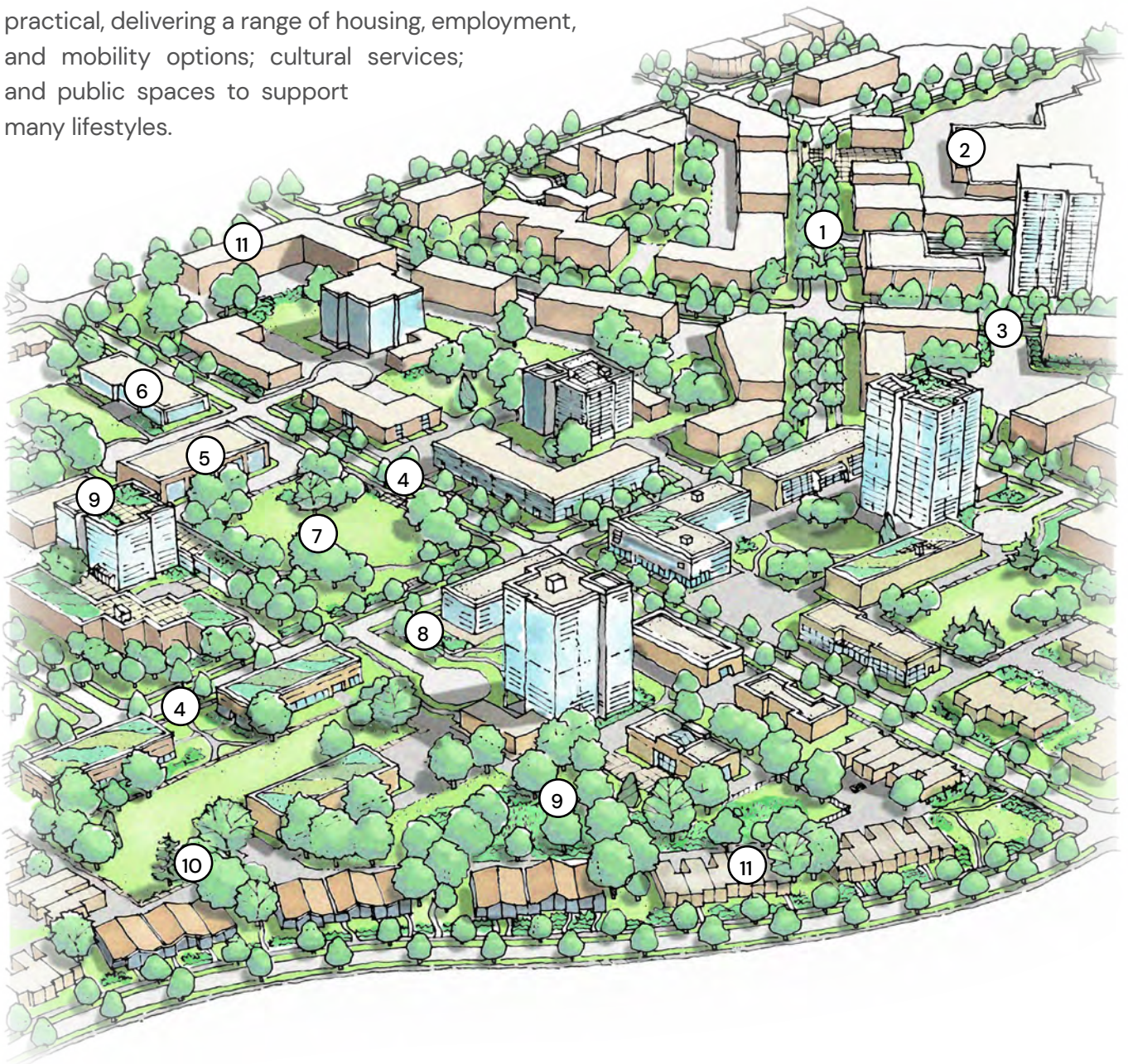




We are not starting from scratch. Nanaimo has many existing places that can and will evolve to become the complete communities that Nanaimo residents describe in their vision for the future. A key approach in *City Plan* is reinvesting in our existing places to fill gaps, capitalize on existing services and amenities, and bring new energy. Reimagining our Urban Centres and Neighbourhoods helps us see this future.

## REIMAGINING: INTEGRATED URBAN CENTRES

Integrated Urban Centres are intended to have the city's highest density and mix of land uses, working towards creating a critical mass of housing, employment, services, and civic activities that support a vibrant and active urban character. Urban Centres also serve as mobility hubs, and are integral to our transit and transportation network. To attract residents and be sustainable, Urban Centres need to be energy efficient, beautiful, and practical, delivering a range of housing, employment, and mobility options; cultural services; and public spaces to support many lifestyles.







## WHAT CAN WE IMAGINE IN OUR FUTURE URBAN CENTRES?

- 1 A vibrant shopping area with shops and services along a pedestrian oriented street
- 2 An institutional, commercial, or civic employment magnet
- 3 A central transit hub connecting to other Urban Centres and regional destinations
- 4 Multi-modal streets that prioritize walking, rolling, and cycling
- 5 A community recreation and wellness destination
- 6 An urban school site, integrated with community facilities
- 7 A destination green space for rest, access to nature, and community gathering
- 8 Plazas and open spaces that integrate cultural and art elements
- 9 Green infrastructure including stormwater ponds, green roofs, and efficient buildings
- 10 A robust tree canopy
- 11 Buildings that step down between the Urban Centre and adjacent Neighbourhoods



# REIMAGINING: INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

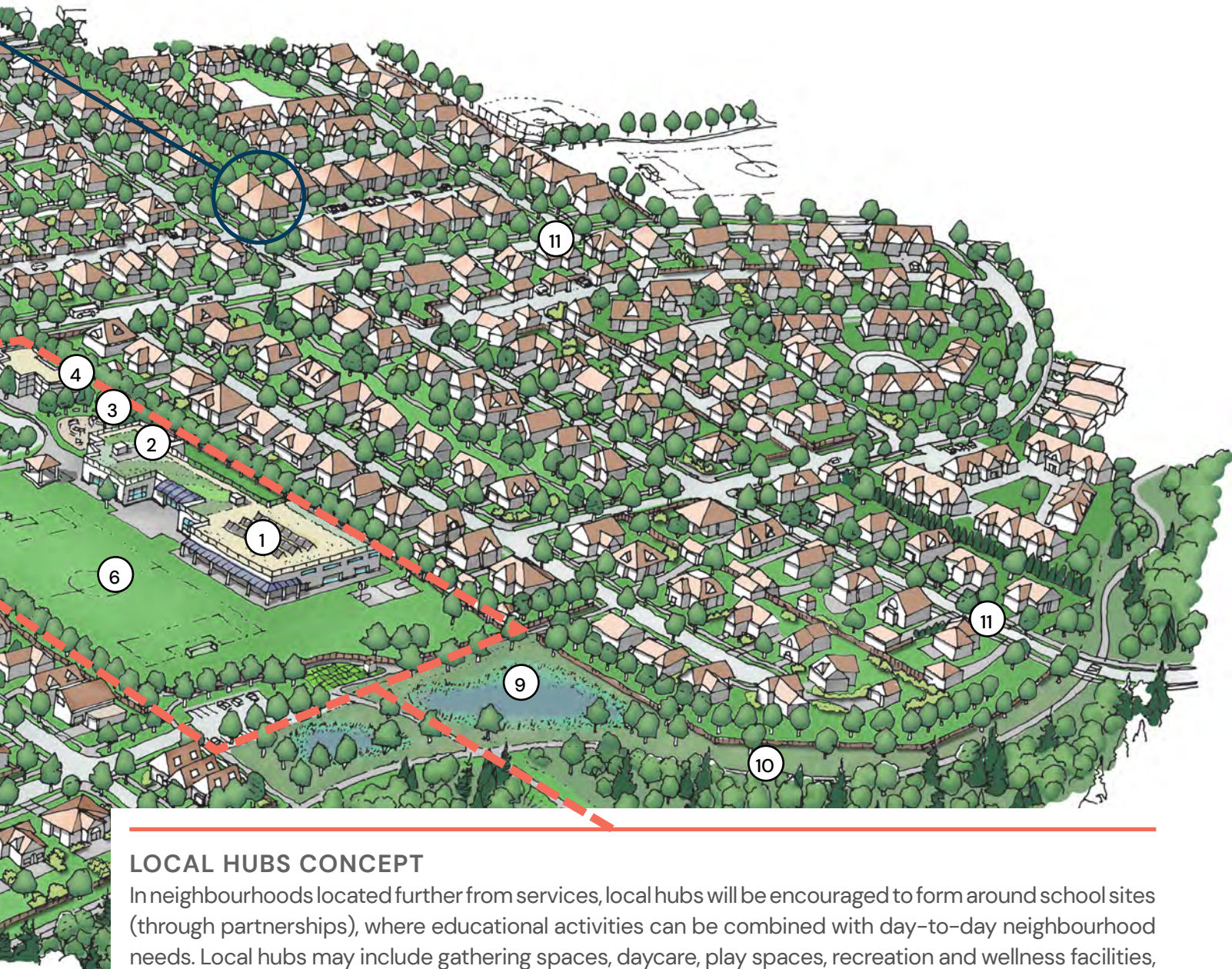
Nanaimo's Neighbourhoods will be places for living with a focus on community connection. While it is expected that some growth and redevelopment will occur in neighbourhoods, it is anticipated they will remain low density with fewer services than Urban Centres and Corridors.





## WHAT CAN WE IMAGINE IN OUR FUTURE NEIGHBOURHOODS?


- ① School with joint use community wellbeing facilities
- ② Daycare
- ③ School / Neighbourhood play area
- ④ Potential small scale local tenants (e.g., corner store, cafe, medical)
- ⑤ Parking area with joint school / community use (e.g., potential bike / vehicle co-op)
- ⑥ Joint use playing field and park space
- ⑦ Central transit stop
- ⑧ Community greenway / neighbourhood parkland
- ⑨ Stormwater ponds
- ⑩ Forest or stream buffer with trail connection
- ⑪ Multi-modal mobility collector street



### LOCAL HUBS CONCEPT

In neighbourhoods located further from services, local hubs will be encouraged to form around school sites (through partnerships), where educational activities can be combined with day-to-day neighbourhood needs. Local hubs may include gathering spaces, daycare, play spaces, recreation and wellness facilities, community meeting spaces, cafes, public art, cultural performance facilities, and other neighbourhood-scale activities. These local hubs are envisioned to fill an existing gap in neighbourhood-scale services and support more people in neighbourhoods having better access to daily needs.





Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

– Gro Harlem Brundtland

Image: Sarah Etoile

## TAKING ACTION

*City Plan – Nanaimo Reimagined* focuses on what we wish to achieve as a city. It puts policies in place to ensure that changes through development and investment align with the community’s vision for Nanaimo’s future.

We know that change is upon us. While we have a good sense of where we wish to go as a community, we also know we cannot predict everything that will come our way. Our future depends on us embracing and directing change in a way that realizes our collective vision. Taking action means preparing the tools, relationships, and directions that will help us make informed choices and ensure that Nanaimo thrives, whatever comes our way.



**LEARN MORE:**  
See pp. 221–257 of *City Plan*

# IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

## SIX AREAS FOR TAKING ACTION

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**Area Plans** are tools to manage development and provide more detailed policy directions for specific areas of the city that are anticipated to absorb higher levels of residential and employment growth. How we use our existing plans and prioritize the creation of new plans will help us prepare for change.

*City Plan Section E1, page 222*

**Bylaws and Permits** are used to implement the policy directions of *City Plan*. They help ensure development proposals are consistent with the city's strategic directions and priorities.

*City Plan Section E2, page 230*

**Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas** overlay special requirements onto lands within the city that have sensitivities or special considerations such environmental, hazard, and design conditions, that need to be taken into account during development and redevelopment.

*City Plan Section E3, page 233*

**Financial Mechanisms and Community Benefits** identifies tools to ensure that new development contributes equitably to our public infrastructure.

*City Plan Section E4, page 248*

**Relationships** recognizes that growing a successful and sustainable city is a team effort, requiring many partners pursuing common objectives. Achieving these objectives cannot be done by the City alone, and will require ongoing collaboration with, and support from partners, stakeholders, and community members at all levels.

*City Plan Section E5, page 251*

**Implementation** links *City Plan* to key documents that will support its realization including an *Integrated Action Plan* that will articulate the concrete steps the City will take to make progress towards the Five City Goals, and a *Monitoring Strategy* that will identify the key indicators that will be tracked regularly to provide meaningful, holistic insights on our progress.

*City Plan Section E6, page 253*

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This Executive Summary provides an overview of key elements of *City Plan*. We invite everyone to explore all aspects of *City Plan - Nanaimo Reimagined*, which charts our path forward for our coming 25 years.



CITY OF NANAIMO  
THE HARBOUR CITY



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