

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Council gives green light to creation of a Systems Planning Organization**

*Society will enable a coordinated action & advocacy plan to address homelessness*

#### **Summary**

On Monday, May 2, Council gave approval for the establishment of a Systems Planning Organization (SPO) and approved the Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society Charter.

Early in their term, Council recognized the need to address the health and housing crisis and struck a Health and Housing Task Force in May 2019. The Task Force's work concluded in early 2021 and a Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP) was endorsed by Council. The creation of the SPO was a recommendation from the HHAP beginning with a Transition Group consisting of members of City Council, Snuneymuxw First Nation Councillors, local service agencies and the Chamber of Commerce that was established to oversee the creation of a Charter document.

After seeking input from the business community and a working group of the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, a final version of the Charter was presented to Council who voted unanimously to approve it and establish the SPO.

The purpose of the SPO is to provide research, data, analysis, education and information related to the community's collective homelessness prevention and response priorities. It also enables a coordinated action and advocacy response by Nanaimo's non-profit organizations, Snuneymuxw First Nation and other levels of government, the business sector and the broader community.

The Society will be managed by an Executive Director and overseen by a board with nine directors. It is anticipated that the Nanaimo SPO will have its first meeting before summer 2022 and have an Executive Director in place by early fall.

**Strategic Link:** Supporting the work and recommendations of the Health and Housing Task Force to address the health and housing crisis and work towards being a community that is livable and full of opportunity for all generations and walks of life.

## Key Points

- Council has approved the Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society Charter, which will guide the establishment of a Systems Planning Organization Society.
- The SPO will be managed by an Executive Director and overseen by a board of nine directors.
- The goal of the SPO is to optimize the current approach to homelessness advocacy and prevention and to enable an effective, coordinated response.

## Quotes

"Having a society dedicated to providing a coordinated response to our community's health and housing crisis is a huge step forward. The City of Nanaimo, along with Snuneymuxw First Nation and many non-profit organizations, businesses and individuals have been working tirelessly for years to advocate for greater support. The Health and Housing Systems Planning Organization will help optimize the current approach and maximize the return on investment, meaning that resources aimed to address an end to homelessness in Nanaimo are as effective as possible and will bring about much-needed change."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

"It is exciting to see the work of the Health and Housing Task Force, and the Transition Team, come to fruition through the creation of this valuable, and much-needed, entity. Many individuals and organizations have dedicated their time and efforts to trying to find solutions to an overwhelming situation, and I am grateful to have been a part of those discussions. The path forward will be much clearer with the focused guidance, action and advocacy of the SPO."

Erin Hemmens  
City Councillor

"A lot of work has been done over the past three years to find solutions to the health and housing crisis affecting our city. Having a SPO in place will really help bring together the key individuals, agencies and organizations who are dedicating their time and efforts to helping our community's most vulnerable get back on their feet. I truly believe the community as a whole will benefit from this, and am happy to see all of Council provide their support."

Don Bonner  
City Councillor

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