

NEWS RELEASE

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Council endorses Commercial Street redesign

Design Commercial concept plan captures new vision for downtown's main corridor.

Summary

Commercial Street is often referred to as the heart of Nanaimo's downtown and, with Council's endorsement at their June 20 meeting, will be the focus of a number of exciting improvements to be rolled out over the next five years.

The Design Commercial project follows a recently approved Downtown Safety Action Plan, which will see the addition of Community Safety Officers in the downtown as well as increased cleaning and other public safety improvements. The vision for Design Commercial is "a green, connected, safe and equitable place that reflects the history of Nanaimo while attracting people, investment and vitality."

Led by Toole Design Group, the work plan for Design Commercial included extensive engagement with the local business improvement associations, businesses, developers, key stakeholders, City staff and the general public. The project also built on the feedback and preliminary directions set out through ReImagine Nanaimo and the draft City Plan.

The concept plan endorsed by Council sees improvements to Commercial Street integrated with other projects such as Diana Krall Plaza improvements, the redevelopment of 1 Commercial Street (former A&B Sound building), 6 Commercial Street (former Jean Burns property) and transit improvements along the 500 block of Terminal Avenue.

Key features of the concept plan include:

- flush curb street
- widened sidewalks
- contrasting colours in the public realm
- improved lighting
- greenery, street trees and natural elements
- on-street flex zones
- redistribution of space and integration of plazas and parks into the street
- public art

The redevelopment of Commercial Street will be phased over a number of years with Phase 1 beginning in 2023. Funding for Phase 1 of the project is included in the 2022 Budget and includes work at Wallace/Commercial as well as upgrades to the Commercial/Bastion intersection. Future phases will be brought forward for consideration in the 2023-2027 budget process.

Strategic Link: Improvements to the downtown core support Council's strategic pillar of Economic Health - increasing pride of place, stimulating the economy and addressing public safety concerns in the downtown.

Key Points

- City Council endorsed the Design Commercial concept plans at their June 20, 2022 meeting.
- The Design Commercial project has been integrated with existing initiatives including improvements to Diana

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Krall Plaza, public realm and transit improvements in the 500 Block of Terminal Ave and redevelopment opportunities at 1 and 6 Commercial Street.

- Revitalization of Commercial Street will be undertaken in a phased approach. Work in 2023 will take place at Wallace and Commercial and the Bastion/Commercial intersection, with further phases to be brought forward for consideration during the 2023-2027 Budget process.

Quotes

"It is an exciting time for downtown Nanaimo, and Council is delighted to endorse the Design Commercial project concepts. One of the key focus areas in Council's Strategic Plan has been to have downtown recognized as a livable and desirable heart of our community - these improvements reflect our commitment to achieving that goal and will revitalize the heart of our community for generations to come."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
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