

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Systems Planning Organization Announces Executive Director**

*New, innovative organization will coordinate research and create strategies to address homelessness*

#### **Summary**

The Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society (Nanaimo SPO) is pleased to announce that it will commence operations on April 1.

The Nanaimo SPO was created in response to one of key recommendations from Health and Housing Action Plan adopted by City Council in 2021.

The plan recognized a need for an independently-led organization to provide a coordinated approach to homelessness, to undertake research, and to provide government with the necessary information to advocate for change in Nanaimo.

The Nanaimo SPO is governed by a Board of nine directors, with representation from the City of Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, individuals with experience working in the housing/health sector, and community members with governance board experience.

The Nanaimo SPO board of directors was established last fall. The board recently hired Executive Director John McCormick, who has nearly three decades of experience in community development, and has been deeply involved in Nanaimo's work to address housing for many years.

McCormick will engage with local stakeholder organizations that work with Nanaimo's local unhoused population to develop a strategic plan and work with the community to develop and direct an appropriate response.

*Strategic Link:* The creation of the Nanaimo SPO supports the goals of City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined.

#### **Key Points**

- The Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization will coordinate the City's response to homelessness. The SPO has representation from City of Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw First Nation, the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and individuals with experience working in the housing/health sector.
- The creation of the Nanaimo SPO achieves a key recommendation of the City Council's Health and Housing Action Plan, adopted in 2021.

#### **Quotes**

"As Chair of the Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Society, I am thrilled to announce that our organization will commence on the ground operations on April 1. We are delighted to have John McCormick as our Executive Director, to help lead the organization in achieving its goals. Our first order of business will be to build connections with local not-for-profits serving Nanaimo's unhoused population and develop a strategic plan in collaboration with the community. We are excited to embark on this journey and look forward to making a positive impact in our community."

Don Bonner  
Chair

Nanaimo Systems Planning Organization Board of Directors

"The Nanaimo SPO will provide the leadership we need to reach the goals of Council's Health and Housing Action Plan. This is a big step toward having the well-coordinated and informed approach required to address housing and homelessness issues in Nanaimo."

Leonard Krog  
Mayor  
City of Nanaimo

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