

# REIMAGINE NANAIMO

Phase 2: Our City, Our Choices.

BACKGROUNDER

JUNE 2021



### Land Acknowledgment

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the City of Nanaimo is on the Traditional Territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the Traditional Territories of the Snuneymuxw and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations.

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## PHASE 2 AT A GLANCE

REIMAGINE NANAIMO is our City's opportunity to imagine its future for the next 25 years and beyond. It will set a path for where we want to go and identify strategic directions to get us there.

### THE PIECES WE'RE EXPLORING IN PHASE 2 INCLUDE:

- 1** **Framework** which communicates a holistic approach for creating a city that can be home to thriving people in a thriving place
- 5** **Draft Goals** that provide grounding and focus for implementing the framework
- 24** **Draft Indicators and Targets** that monitor our progress towards our goals
- 3** **Exploratory Scenarios** that are discussion tools for thinking about how Nanaimo could evolve as it grows
- MANY** **Emerging Strategies** to start conversations about ideas that could be considered in our path forward



# INTRODUCTION



Phase 2 is the exploratory part of the **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** journey. It is where we bring together all we've learned so far, talk about ideas for the future, and collectively test different choices. This stage is an exploration where ideas and discussion are valued. It is not an endpoint, but rather an important step that will help us set our path forward.

Nanaimo is a city in transition as it continues to evolve from a small-scale suburban city to a thriving mid-sized urban centre. A beautiful waterfront, nature at our fingertips, and access to urban jobs and living have made Nanaimo a place that existing residents cherish and one that attracts new people seeking a place to call home.

With this popularity comes both opportunity and responsibility. Embracing our role as the major city within our region means planning to add new residents in a way that maintains what makes Nanaimo so special while leveraging growth and change to increase the livability of our city. Growing our city responsibly by focusing rather than sprawling, means we help to protect our larger region's valued forests and agricultural fields from development.

The Nanaimo we know today has been shaped by generations of people before us. Guided by the notion of working together, it's now our responsibility to plan our future and envision a community that is as unique as these great lands.

Exploring directions allows us to focus in on what we wish to achieve most and helps guide future choices to get us there. In a world that's evolving faster than ever before, we must be prepared to navigate change. While we cannot predict every change that will come our way in the next 25 years – working together to refine our goals and identify key strategies creates a powerful tool for making thoughtful decisions.

Looking back at the past ten years, it is clear that change is happening in Nanaimo. Change cannot be ignored, but it need not be feared. By embracing change and guiding it in a way that fulfills our vision, we're choosing our destiny.

We are starting from a solid foundation. Our 2008 Official Community Plan and all our supporting plans imagine a resilient, beautiful, and equitable future for Nanaimo. Harnessing the knowledge of today, we can accelerate progress towards this desired future.

## WE ARE HERE



**PHASE 1**  
**GATHERING IDEAS**  
SUMMER - WINTER 2020



**PHASE 2**  
**EXPLORING OPTIONS**  
SPRING - FALL 2021



**PHASE 3**  
**DEVELOPING PLANS**  
FALL - WINTER 2021/2022

# COMMUNITY INPUT SO FAR

Connecting with and listening to the Nanaimo community is the foundation of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO**. We completed the largest community engagement program in our city to date in summer / fall 2021, connecting with thousands to understand what matters most, key concerns, and ideas for the future. Many perspectives were shared and key themes have emerged. Coupled with analysis of the city today and best practices research, these themes provide direction for Phase 2 explorations.



**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.



**A Waterfront Identity:** The waterfront is part of who we are, and we want more opportunities to connect with and celebrate it.



**A Green Approach:** We are getting ready to embrace our role as a climate leader, making choices that will reduce our impacts, protect our natural assets, and position us for a greener future.



**City Living:** We are preparing to embrace a shift from more suburban to urban living and are excited about more cultural, entertainment, and public living opportunities and daily needs closer to home. However, it's important this transition is thoughtful, with attention to place-making and protecting our character.



**Central Hub Identity:** We're excited about our role as the Central Hub of Vancouver Island and wish to build on this with more transportation connections, economic development, and identity building.



**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 that are for everyone.



**Mobility Choice:** We would like to move around our community more easily by foot and bike, and we want our transit to be more frequent, faster, and accessible.



**Affordable City:** We are concerned about the rising costs of living in our city and are seeking ways to make it possible for people of all socio-economic backgrounds to find their home here.



**Neighbourhood Character:** We value our existing neighbourhoods and the balance between more urban and more residential areas. Maintaining a mix of urban and residential areas and protecting the character of neighbourhoods is important.



**A Thriving Downtown:** We want to see Downtown Nanaimo become the vibrant, engaging centre for arts, culture, entertainment, tourism, business, and employment that has been envisioned over the years.



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

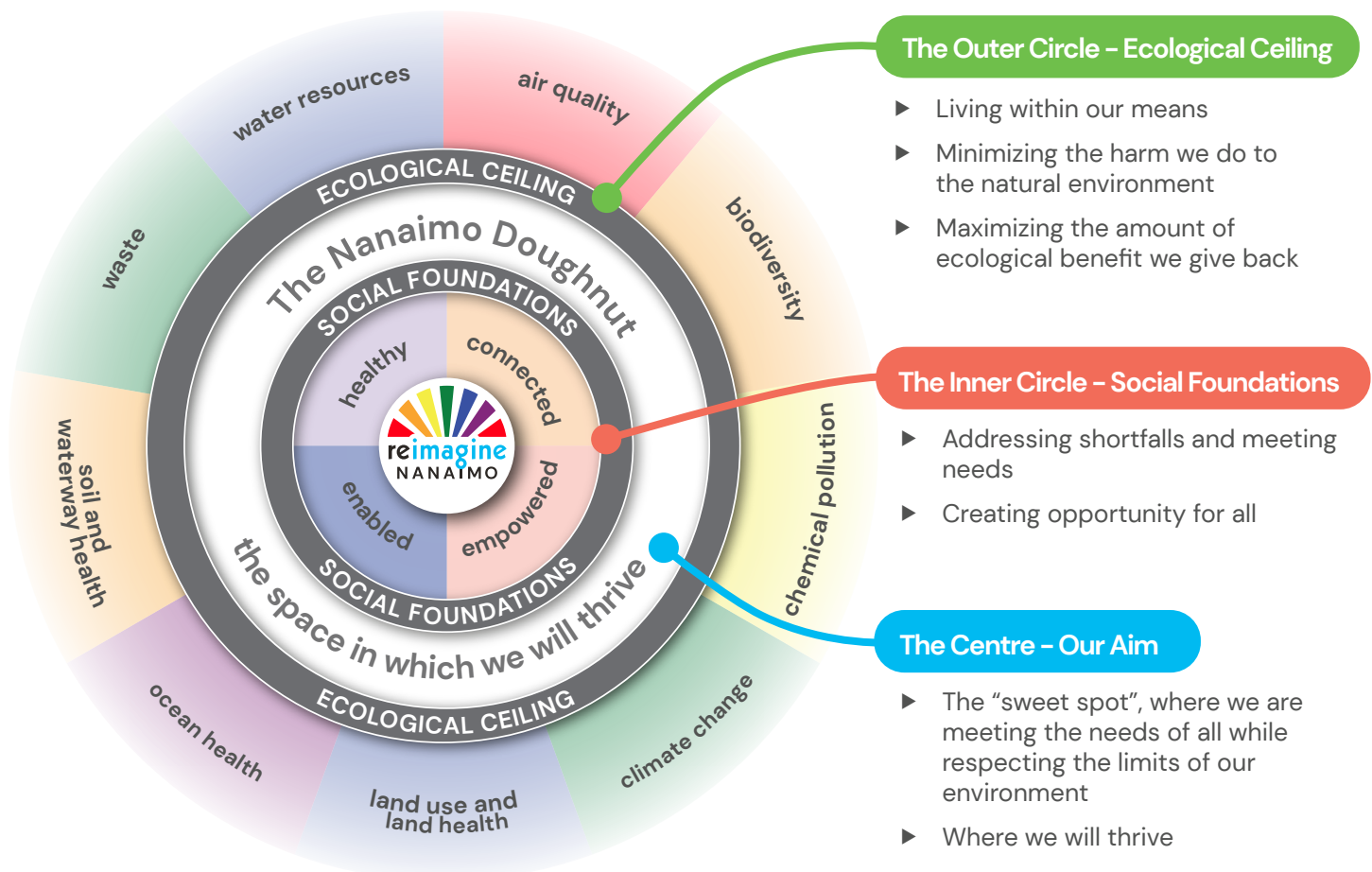


**Great Jobs & Businesses:** We wish to attract and maintain great businesses and institutions that provide quality jobs so we can work close to home in employment that fulfills us.

The **Nanaimo Doughnut** is our draft framework – a way of organizing how we plan for Nanaimo’s future in a balanced and integrated way. It challenges us to consider: *How can **our city** be home to thriving people, in a thriving community, while respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?*

At the city level, this means strengthening our **social foundations** so that all community members can live well, while at the same time staying within our **ecological ceiling** by making choices that protect and enhance our environment. The space in which we thrive is the “doughnut” between respect for social foundations and the ecological ceiling.

The Nanaimo Doughnut is intended to build upon commitments and policies that we are already using, while adding in important new directions that will accelerate our progress towards reaching the space in which we will thrive.

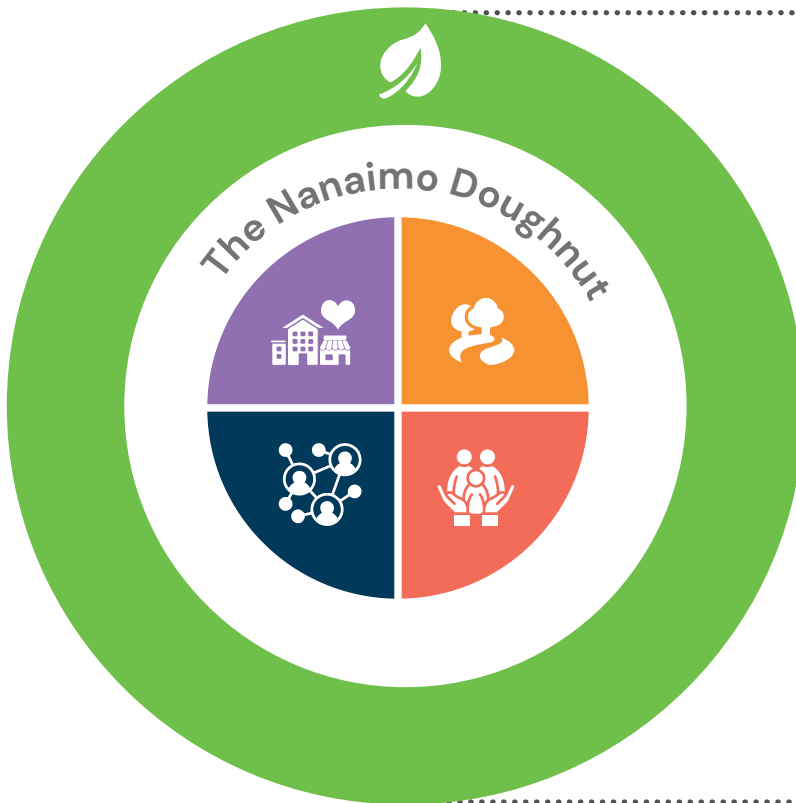


Five **Draft Goals**, based on the framework of the Nanaimo Doughnut, represent areas of focus for the City's future. Together, they are meant to guide a balanced approach. Achieving our goals will happen through a collective commitment to selecting and implementing directions that consistently move the needle closer to where we wish to be.

These five draft goals flow from the organizing framework, while integrating aspirations articulated in our previous plans and community input so far. They will be refined through the Phase 2 explorations.

While each of the five goals represent an area for focus, a city is a complex organism where each goal cannot be considered in isolation. The goals we have and the choices we make invariably intersect and overlap. It is these intersections that make a community truly whole.

## ONE FRAMEWORK ■■■■■→ FIVE DRAFT GOALS



A GREEN NANAIMO:  
RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE  
ECOSYSTEMS



A HEALTHY NANAIMO:  
COMMUNITY WELLBEING &  
LIVABILITY



A CONNECTED NANAIMO:  
EQUITABLE ACCESS &  
MOBILITY



AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO:  
DIVERSITY, CULTURE,  
RECONCILIATION & SOCIAL  
INTEGRITY



AN ENABLED NANAIMO:  
ECONOMIC PROSPERITY &  
RESILIENCY





## A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

### HOW THIS GOAL LINKS TO PHASE 1 INPUT



A Green  
Approach



Access to Nature &  
Outdoor Recreation

### ABOUT A GREEN NANAIMO

A Green Nanaimo is about how we can support the lands, air, and waters that sustain us. It is about advancing collective knowledge, living in harmony with our environment, and responding to the impacts of climate change while protecting people, businesses, and infrastructure. It means making decisions that prioritize a resilient and regenerative environment, moving us towards a city that gives back to our natural world rather than taking from it. A Green Nanaimo recognizes and embraces its role as a sustainable city that helps maintain the naturalness of our larger region and beyond.

### WHY IS A GREEN NANAIMO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

We know that action is required by all to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and preserve the lands and waters on which we rely. We also know that our world is growing and we will be asked to support more people in our community, while at the same time reducing the amount of impact each person makes. Reducing our emissions, providing clean, green alternatives, shifting to green infrastructure, and planning to protect our region's valued lands is imperative for a healthy, sustainable future.

#### DRAFT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS A GREEN NANAIMO

- ▶ Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ▶ Area of Lands Dedicated for Natural Area Protection
- ▶ Water Samples Meeting BC Water Quality Guidelines
- ▶ Household Waste Sent to the Landfill
- ▶ Water Consumption by Residents







# A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY

## HOW THIS GOAL LINKS TO PHASE 1 INPUT



**Affordable City**



**Neighbourhood  
Character**



**Supportive  
City**

## ABOUT A HEALTHY NANAIMO

A Healthy Nanaimo is about both the wellbeing of our residents and the livability of our city. It is about creating a community for all of us. A healthy city means that all people have the opportunity to access and maintain a good standard of living – regardless of their life stage, family composition, or socio-economic status. Nanaimo envisions a city where a person can live an entire lifetime, finding comfort and happiness in a safe and secure home and having access to healthy food. A Healthy Nanaimo is where people do not go unhoused or hungry. It is city where we can all thrive.

## WHY IS A HEALTHY NANAIMO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

When people are able to access the housing and services they need, they are better able to connect and be part of our city fabric. When residents face challenges finding suitable housing, getting nutritious food, or are experiencing homelessness, the health of our whole community is compromised. Working together to improve conditions for all residents to live their best lives is imperative to a Healthy Nanaimo.

### DRAFT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS A HEALTHY NANAIMO

- ▶ Chronic & Episodic Homelessness
- ▶ Rental Housing Affordability
- ▶ Vacancy Rate in Rental Housing
- ▶ Mix of Housing Types
- ▶ Local Food Security







## A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY

### HOW THIS GOAL LINKS TO PHASE 1 INPUT



City Living



Access to Nature &  
Outdoor Recreation



Mobility Choice



Central Hub  
Identity



A Green  
Approach



Great Jobs &  
Businesses

### ABOUT A CONNECTED NANAIMO

A Connected Nanaimo allows people to easily access what matters to them. Our connections are how we experience our community. Everyone needs to get around and we should have safe, equitable, and enjoyable options to do so. Complete, compact neighbourhoods that provide daily needs closer to home allow people to choose more walking or cycling. A well-linked multi-modal transportation system provides choices about how we travel through our city and beyond. A Connected Nanaimo means access and mobility for everyone.

### WHY IS A CONNECTED NANAIMO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

As our population grows, more people will be moving around. We don't have space to add new roads, which means we need to make the best use of what we have. To do this, alternative transportation options need to become more attractive than single-occupancy vehicles. Planning ahead to become a more complete and connected community that provides many good options to move, while reducing the distances we must go, increases livability, decreases pollution, enhances safety, and connects us to our destinations and to one another.

#### DRAFT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS A CONNECTED NANAIMO

- ▶ Transportation by Mode
- ▶ Distance Driven
- ▶ Access to Daily Needs
- ▶ Growth in Town Centres and Corridors
- ▶ Traffic Injury Rate







## AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: DIVERSITY, CULTURE, RECONCILIATION, & SOCIAL INTEGRITY

### HOW THIS GOAL LINKS TO PHASE 1 INPUT



**Inclusive &  
Equitable**



**A Waterfront  
Identity**



**A Thriving  
Downtown**



**City Living**



**Central Hub  
Identity**



**Access to Nature &  
Outdoor Recreation**

### ABOUT AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO

An Empowered Nanaimo feels welcoming and safe to all those who choose this city as home. Together, we are actively making progress towards reconciliation. It's a recognition that we are all different – and these differences make our community interesting, innovative, and vital. Our differences affect our experiences and by embracing diversity we are building our community spirit. It's about hearing each voice in civic life – through effective engagement and public process. In an Empowered Nanaimo, everyone can find their place in the city's diverse social fabric and contribute to our community's future.

### WHY IS AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

Everyone deserves a chance to belong. Nanaimo wishes to be the kind of community that provides this opportunity for all. When citizens feel safe and have found their place and voice in the community, we feel freer to share, learn, celebrate, and grow together. This inclusivity is, in turn, reflected in our community pride, character, and identity.

#### DRAFT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO

- ▶ Inclusion and Diversity
- ▶ Participation in Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs and Services
- ▶ Investment in Arts, Culture, and Heritage
- ▶ Public Waterfront Access
- ▶ Political Voice





## AN ENABLED NANAIMO: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & RESILIENCY

### HOW THIS GOAL LINKS TO PHASE 1 INPUT



Great Jobs &  
Businesses



Central Hub  
Identity



A Thriving  
Downtown



A Waterfront  
Identity

### ABOUT AN ENABLED NANAIMO

An Enabled Nanaimo is about attracting and maintaining great businesses and institutions that provide good jobs, places to shop, and opportunities that keep our city thriving. Enabling homegrown ideas, talent, and businesses while welcoming new investment from around the world will advance our city's prosperity. It involves harnessing our unique assets and communicating them in a way that really calls to people, embracing and building upon what makes Nanaimo special. An Enabled Nanaimo is known as a great place – to live, to work, and to experience.

### WHY IS AN ENABLED NANAIMO IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

Nanaimo's location at the hub of a growing Central Vancouver Island positions us to be home to a thriving economy. Planning ahead through a culture of collaboration allows us to effectively see and capitalize on emerging opportunities that allow businesses, institutions, and entrepreneurs to thrive, tourism to grow, and residents to enjoy the prosperity that is achieved.

#### DRAFT INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS AN ENABLED NANAIMO

- ▶ Workforce Population
- ▶ Non-Residential Building Permits
- ▶ Ample & Diverse Business Opportunities
- ▶ Economic Success & Competitiveness  
(Economic Structure Index)





Great change doesn't happen overnight: it is achieved step by step through committed, ongoing efforts by many. So how do we know if we're headed towards success? Targets give us a concrete point to work towards. Indicators tell us how we're doing. Together, targets and indicators help us understand how our collective actions move us closer to where we wish to be and allow us to adjust our course if needed to achieve our goals.

By developing targets and indicators, the City is committing to a process of ongoing monitoring and reporting. This signals the importance of selecting a reasonable number of key indicators that provide meaningful, holistic insights that can be regularly tracked at the city-level. While the City does and will continue to monitor many supporting statistics through different processes, working together to select a few key indicators for annual reporting is important to tracking the success of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO**.

From thousands of potential indicators a city can track, choosing meaningful ones requires careful thought. Key criteria help narrow our focus.

- ▶ **City Influence:** Are we monitoring something that the City has the power to affect through our actions or policies?
- ▶ **City Scale:** Is what we're monitoring meaningful at the city scale or is it better monitored at a regional or provincial level?
- ▶ **Data Availability:** Will we have the ability to collect reliable, city-scaled data frequently enough?
- ▶ **Representative:** Will monitoring this provide a meaningful and balanced indication of progress towards our goals?

Draft indicators and targets have been identified through a collaborative process involving staff, stakeholders, Council, and Committees. The process has considered:

- ▶ Alignment with the Nanaimo Doughnut framework.
- ▶ Incorporation of existing targets the City has set through previous policy and plans.
- ▶ Consideration of indicators that the City is already tracking.
- ▶ Analysis of current and potential future data.
- ▶ Deliberation and discussion to identify a manageable number of indicators with potential.

The draft indicators and targets shown on the following pages are a foundation. Refinement of targets and indicators and data collection to set a baseline is intended to continue through **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** and as we begin the process of annual tracking and reporting.

Nanaimo is a city where we use emerging data and technology, requiring that we continue adapting and adjusting as new information becomes available. To this end, new indicators may be added to reflect emerging information, or tracking may evolve to reflect our increasing knowledge base.



A GREEN NANAIMO:  
RESILIENT& REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS



**Water Resources:** so everyone has access to clean drinking water and we preserve this resource for future generations

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Water Consumption by Residents	» New target to be set as previous target was exceeded	206 litres / capita / day (2019)

**Waste:** so we use our resources sustainably

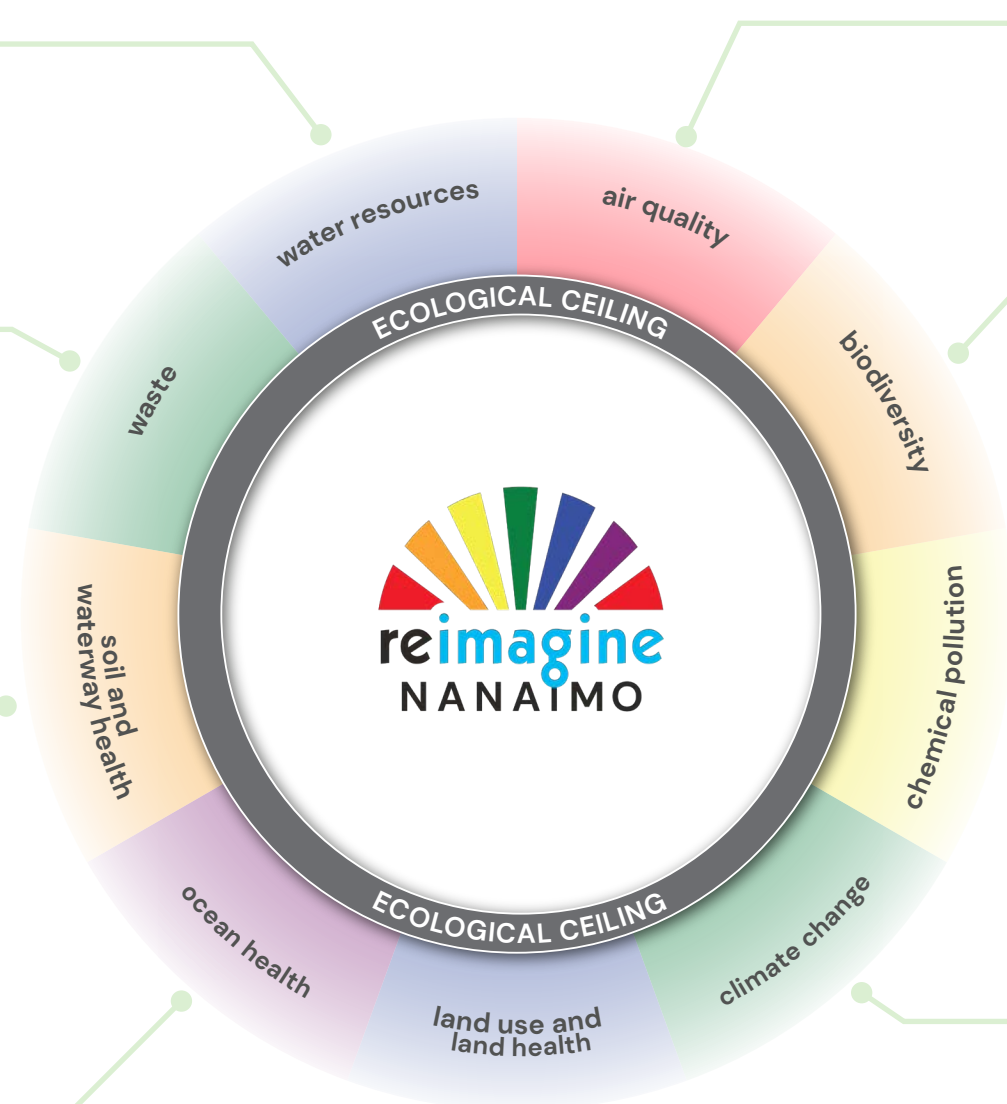
Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Household Waste Sent to the Landfill	» By 2030 150 kg / household / yr » By 2040 120 kg / household / yr » By 2050 100 kg / household / yr	191 kg / household / year (2019)

**Soil and waterway health:** so our lands and waters are healthy and cared for / managed sustainably

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Water Samples (at monitored sites) Meeting BC Water Quality Guidelines	» Zero samples that fail to meet guidelines	TBD

**Ocean health:** so our lands and waters are healthy and cared for / managed sustainably

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Water Samples (at monitored sites) Meeting BC Water Quality Guidelines	» Zero samples that fail to meet guidelines	TBD



**Air quality:** so everyone has good quality air to breathe

Monitored hourly at the provincial level.

**Biodiversity:** so our ecosystems are healthy and cared for

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Area of Lands Dedicated for Natural Area Protection (PRC1-Zoning)	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	2,152 ha

**Chemical Pollution:** so our lands and waters are healthy and cared for / managed sustainably

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Water Samples (at monitored sites) Meeting BC Water Quality Guidelines	» Zero samples that fail to meet guidelines	TBD

**Climate change:** so the impacts of climate change are minimized for present and future generations

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	» By 2030 reduce to 50%-58% below 2010 » By 2050 reduce to 94%-107% below 2010	465,000 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (2010)

**Land use and land health:** so our lands and waters are healthy and cared for / managed sustainably

Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Area of Lands Dedicated for Natural Area Protection (PRC1-Zoning)	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	2,152 ha



## A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY

so everyone has access to healthy, safe, and affordable food and housing

Element	Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Chronic & Episodic Homelessness	Point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness	» Zero	433 (2020)
Rental Housing Affordability	Average rent of a 2-bedroom apartment	» TBD	\$1,263 (2020)
Vacancy Rate in Rental Housing	Percent of vacancies in rental accommodation	» 3%-5%	1% (2020)
Mix of Housing Types	Proportion of single-family, ground-oriented, and apartment housing types	» TBD	» 60% single-family » 18% ground-oriented » 22% apartment (2020)
Local Food Security	TBD	» TBD	TBD



## AN ENABLED NANAIMO: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & RESILIENCY

so everyone has opportunity to find good employment, and businesses and institutions can thrive

Element	Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Workforce Population	Percent of population that are of an age likely to be in the workforce (15-64)	» 67% of total population	63% (2020)
Non-Residential Building Permits	Value of commercial and public building permits issued	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	\$37.5 million (2020)
Ample & Diverse Business Opportunities	Number of total businesses and businesses with employees	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	6,281 businesses with 1+ employees (2020)
Economic Success & Competitiveness	Economic Structure Index	» TBD	TBD



## A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY

so everyone has safe, affordable, and sustainable options to move around and to access their daily needs

Element	Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Transportation by Mode	Trips made by different modes of transportation	Modal split by 2041: » 12% walking » 4% cycling » 8% transit » 76% vehicle	2016 modal split: » 6% walking » 2% cycling » 4% transit » 86% vehicle
Distance Driven	Average distance driven per person per day	» 10 km / day / person by 2041	14 km / day / person (2011)
Access to Daily Needs	Number of households within walking distance to employment lands, essential services, schools, transit, recreation services, parks, and healthcare	» TBD	TBD
Growth in Town Centres and Corridors	Proportion of growth occurring in designated growth areas - town centres and corridors	» TBD	TBD
Traffic Injury Rate	Number of reported crashes in the City	» Vision Zero	TBD



## AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: DIVERSITY, CULTURE, RECONCILIATION, & SOCIAL INTEGRITY

so everyone can thrive and have opportunities to connect and participate in a way that fulfills them

Element	Draft Indicator	Draft Target	Baseline (if known)
Inclusion & Diversity	TBD	» TBD	TBD
Investment in Arts, Culture, and Heritage	Dollars being invested into arts, culture, and heritage	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	TBD
Participation in Parks, Recreation, and Culture Programs and Services	Number of people participating in PRC programs and services	» General: increase » Specific target TBD	TBD
Public Waterfront Access	Length of waterfront with public access and number of publicly accessible waterfront features	» Increase	TBD
Political Voice	TBD	» TBD	TBD



# EXPLORING GROWTH



Nanaimo is now home to 100,000. Like many of us who have been part of this growth, others will also choose Nanaimo for their home. Growth projections tell us that we can expect 25,000 to 40,000 residents to join our community in the next 25 years with an additional 18,000 jobs created. While much of our city will continue on as the neighbourhoods and features we know and love, some areas will change in the next 25 years. By choosing where to focus new growth and planning what it could look like, we're setting Nanaimo on its future path.

A growing population presents both opportunities (hello new jobs and amenities!) as well as challenges (how can we be affordable and green, while managing traffic congestion?). The choices we make now will influence how and where we grow. Exploring different ways we could grow allows us to test out choices and better understand benefits and drawbacks.

In the previous century, Nanaimo's growth was outward and linear – stretching the city north and south. In more recent years, the city has set and maintained an Urban Containment Boundary that has focused servicing and growth more to existing urban areas, helping to preserve agricultural lands and natural areas in the region beyond, while limiting sprawl and supporting more efficient use of roads, sewer, water, and storm services.

In recent years, the pace of multi-family housing being built in Nanaimo has eclipsed single-family development for the first time. This signals a transition from a more suburban community to one that will become more urban. Nanaimo is entering a period in its evolution where infill will increase, using sites within the city that are undeveloped or underdeveloped. Our growth forward will be different from our past.

Exploratory growth scenarios are an important step in **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** to understand the potential future composition of our city. Growth scenarios are not a guarantee of the future, and the intention is not to pick a "winner." They are created to help us talk through a range of changes that could occur and help identify directions that could best guide a future that meets our goals. Through this exercise, we have an opportunity to discuss potential growth scenarios and evaluate them using select representative indicators. This will help us understand the strengths and challenges behind growth choices and identify long range land use and policy directions that align with the community's vision.

Scenarios exploration will be taking place with the community to support an informed discussion about Nanaimo's future. This Phase 2 engagement will help us select and blend the best ideas and identify new ideas to investigate further. Phase 3 of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** will involve creation of a scenario that directs land use and supporting policies as part of Nanaimo's updated City Plan.

# CONTEXT

As we plan for growth, it's important to consider Nanaimo's context. Several key context observations have emerged so far.

## We are a City in a Region

As the largest city in our region, Nanaimo has an important role in accommodating growth in order to reduce regional sprawl and protect the vital forests, meadows, fields, and recreational lands we love that sit just beyond our city edges. This means we need to carefully consider how our choices affect not only Nanaimo, but our region. If we plan to accommodate growth wisely, it can help ensure new growth isn't pushed into sprawling forms on nearby regional lands leading to more land being consumed and more people driving further to access their daily needs.

## We're Building on What We Have

Considering that we currently have 100,000 people living here today and we're planning for an additional 40,000 over the next 25 years, 70% of our 2046 population are already living here. This means that change through growth is slow and incremental and much of what exists today will very much be part of what's here in 25 years. Planning to position growth where it's desired is important, but it won't completely change the city we are today.

## We are a Mid-Density City

We are coming from a past of being a suburban city. Prior to this century, our growth has been long and linear, stretching north and south at relatively low densities. This means, as a city, we have and will continue to have much lower overall population density than more urban centres in the Lower Mainland and Capital Region. Even as our population grows, Nanaimo will continue to be a mid-density city.

## There are Many Opportunities for Infill

Because of Nanaimo's past growth, we have a lot of low density sites in our city. Many of our commercial areas are auto-oriented, with single-level buildings and vast surface parking. As our city grows, these large land areas will likely become more attractive for future redevelopment making large areas of land available.

## We Must Choose Where We Grow

If even a few large-scale developments occur, they may absorb a very large proportion of the future growth projected for Nanaimo. This means less demand for growth in other areas. Therefore, it is important to think about encouraging growth in locations where it will best help us achieve our goals.

## Growth is Part of a Larger Strategy

Growth alone will not create a sustainable and resilient city. While it's important that we make thoughtful choices about future growth, we're not going to achieve success around our mobility, climate change, and social goals without implementing key strategies that will be needed no matter where or how growth occurs. Our success will partly rely on changing our collective behaviours, embracing technology, and investing in green and sustainable infrastructure. Combining a strong land use plan that identifies where and how we wish to grow sustainably in the future, with powerful actions and strategies, will be required to achieve our goals..



As an initial step to **REIMAGINE NANAIMO**, the City prepared population and housing projections and completed a land capacity analysis to better understand key drivers of change in Nanaimo and the capacity of existing lands to accommodate this change. These studies provide important background to exploring growth scenarios. Key findings are summarized below.

## GROWTH PROJECTIONS

In 2020, Vann Struth Consulting Group Inc. prepared population projections for Nanaimo. Key findings are summarized below (refer to the Growth Projections Backgrounder for additional information):

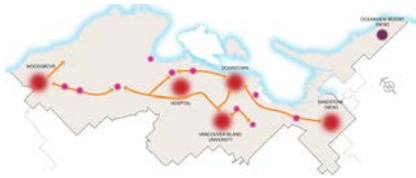
- ▶ At last Census in 2016, Nanaimo's population was just under 95,000 and we've now surpassed 100,000 in 2021
- ▶ By 2046, it is estimated Nanaimo's population will grow to between 125,000 to 140,000. The larger number, 140,000, is used for planning purposes
- ▶ To accommodate this growth, it is estimated that an additional 21,000 housing units will be needed by 2046
- ▶ The oldest demographic (75+) will see the largest increase in population growth while the <35 age group will see the lowest growth
- ▶ Employment is projected to grow at a slightly slower pace due to the large number of retirement-age residents with an additional 12,500 – 18,000 jobs created. The larger number, 18,000, is used for planning purposes
- ▶ These projections were completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which may have lasting, unknown predictions

## LAND INVENTORY & CAPACITY

In 2020, Colliers International Consulting prepared a land inventory and capacity analysis of growth trends and how these trends could affect developable lands (refer to the Land Capacity Backgrounder for additional information):

- ▶ While single-family homes are currently the main housing type in Nanaimo, multi-family developments are now being built at a faster pace than single-family homes. This trend is expected to continue
- ▶ While there is more than enough land available to accommodate projected demands for multi-family dwellings, much of the single-family land within the city boundary has been developed
- ▶ While the city has more than enough commercially-designated lands to accommodate projected commercial growth, there is need to concentrate commercial activity and infill existing town centres to support existing retail. The spread-out nature of Nanaimo's commercial areas presents challenges to creating thriving pockets of business and walkable neighbourhoods
- ▶ There is shortage of usable vacant industrial land within the city boundary to meet projected demand, and solutions are needed to quickly grow industrial land supply

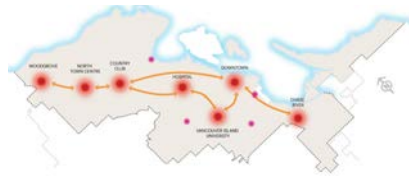
## AN OVERVIEW

**SCENARIO 1:  
CURRENT PATH**

The current path follows the existing Official Community Plan, meaning our future growth will likely most closely resemble the growth we've seen the past five years. It likely will lead to much of our new development occurring in South Nanaimo, including a new Town Centre south of Chase River (Sandstone) and a new resort area in Oceanview at the very south.

It anticipates that about 20% of new growth will be in the form of single-family detached homes, with the remaining 80% distributed through Town Centres, Commercial Centres, and Corridors.

Implementing this scenario would require few changes from the current course.

**SCENARIO 2:  
MOBILITY HUBS**

This growth scenario favours a shift towards more compact forms of housing within Town Centres and Corridors linked to mobility hubs and transit, while supporting lower-density development in some outlying areas.

It encourages more ground-oriented building forms that fill the gap that can exist between single-family and apartment forms and can attract families and those entering the housing market.

Implementing this scenario will require modest changes from our current course of action.

**SCENARIO 3:  
CENTRAL FOCUS**

Central Focus encourages most new growth and higher-density housing within a focused urban core bounded by Downtown, the Hospital, and Vancouver Island University. It would lead to a more urban, walkable, and vibrant central core with less growth and change (though still some) in areas beyond this core.

This core would be the priority for investments in walkability, transit, culture, and services. Neighbourhoods beyond the core would remain more similar to today with some infill anticipated.

More ambitious changes are required to achieve this scenario by focusing more on new growth within key urban centres.

The next step is to analyze and discuss growth within each scenario and how it could affect the goals that we've set for our future. This will be a focus of the Phase 2 engagement.



# EMERGING STRATEGIES



While creating a thoughtful pattern for future community growth is important, there are also many strategic directions for improving our city that may not substantially differ from one growth scenario and the next. Combining a strong land use plan with strategies to guide our priorities is a holistic approach to navigating our future. A community discussion on emerging strategies allows us to initially explore a range of strategies that will be developed and refined during Phase 3.

Through engagement, Nanaimo residents have identified issues and opportunities of great importance to them that will need to be addressed as we move into the next iteration of our city. Strategic directions to address issues and opportunities are vitally important because they set the groundwork for priorities and decisions that will be made in the future.

From Phase 1 input and using existing policies and strategies, we can begin to identify and set clear intentions about what we will do. Emerging strategies are the beginning of a collection of directions that may be formed into policy or actions for the future. They are intended to continue the discussion the community began in Phase 1 about what is important to them and to consider potential ways these issues and opportunities could be addressed.

To continue the conversation, initial emerging strategies are being explored during Phase 2 with continued discussion encouraged on topics important to the community. The following draft list identifies emerging strategy topic areas. Additional topic areas may be identified and added during the Phase 2 explorations.

## A GREEN NANAIMO: RESILIENT & REGENERATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

- ▶ Climate Change Emergency
- ▶ Protected Ecosystems
- ▶ Eliminating Waste
- ▶ Water Use and Conservation

## A HEALTHY NANAIMO: COMMUNITY WELLBEING & LIVABILITY

- ▶ Supporting Vulnerable Populations
- ▶ Affordable Housing
- ▶ Welcoming Community
- ▶ Cost Effective Infrastructure

## A CONNECTED NANAIMO: EQUITABLE ACCESS & MOBILITY

- ▶ Daily Needs Closer to Home
- ▶ Active Transportation
- ▶ Mobility

## AN EMPOWERED NANAIMO: DIVERSITY, CULTURE, RECONCILIATION, & SOCIAL INTEGRITY

- ▶ Indoor & Outdoor Recreation
- ▶ Arts & Culture
- ▶ Waterfront Access

## AN ENABLED NANAIMO: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & RESILIENCY

- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Businesses & Industry



# LOOKING AHEAD

While Phase 2 of **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** is our time to explore, Phase 3 will be where we compile the ideas, preferences, and directions into draft plans. It will be our time to draft policy and strategy documents that bring together what we've explored into a City Plan and its supporting Action Plans.

The new City Plan that is created through **REIMAGINE NANAIMO** will update and replace the current Official Community Plan and will expand to include integrated direction on our spaces and places, how we move around the city, and how we respond to a changing climate. It will identify what the community needs to do together in order to grow, adapt, and succeed. It will outline a land use strategy for Nanaimo's future growth and a means of advancing our community's goals.

Following from the Nanaimo Doughnut, the new City Plan will take a more holistic view of our city, integrating components that have been planned separately in the past, including parks, recreation, and culture, active transportation, and climate change adaptation. The goal of this integrated approach is a collective view that recognizes the city as a living, breathing organism that is made of interconnected parts: when we make changes to one part, invariably other city components are affected.

The City Plan's role will be to provide high-level policy direction for the city. As such, it will apply a city-level lens to the directions developed through this process, identifying overarching policy directions that address the often very specific comments received from participants. As the City Plan takes this necessarily broad city-scale view, supporting Action Plans that follow will delve further into the detailed actions that reflect specific desires.

The City Plan will be developed with key principles in mind:

- ▶ **Simple.** Focus on the direction needed to facilitate thoughtful evolution in our city and communicate this in a way so that all those responsible for this evolution – Councils, staff, developers, partners, individuals, and more – can understand and help to implement the City Plan.
- ▶ **Unified.** Recognize the inherent relationship between all elements that make up our city and bring together the knowledge and foundation of all departments to work within the framework for the future.
- ▶ **Practical.** Recognize that a theoretical framework has little value if it cannot be practically implemented. This means our City Plan must be easy to use and tested through implementation.
- ▶ **Flexible.** This City Plan needs to be able to adapt to a changing world and be responsive to future shifts in governance, knowledge, best practices, and continuing evolution of planning needs.

# HOW IT FITS TOGETHER



The plans that emerge from REIMAGINE NANAIMO are intended to streamline and integrate key planning documents the city will use. Two key ingredients are imagined: an overarching Integrated **City Plan** and **Supporting Action Plans and Strategies**. This structure will be refined through the process.







City of Nanaimo  
455 Wallace Street  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6

E | [reimagine@nanaimo.ca](mailto:reimagine@nanaimo.ca)

T | 250-754-4251

[getinvolvednanaimo.ca](http://getinvolvednanaimo.ca)

