



WOODGROVE

— AREA PLAN —

Phase 2 Engagement Summary Report

AUGUST 2025

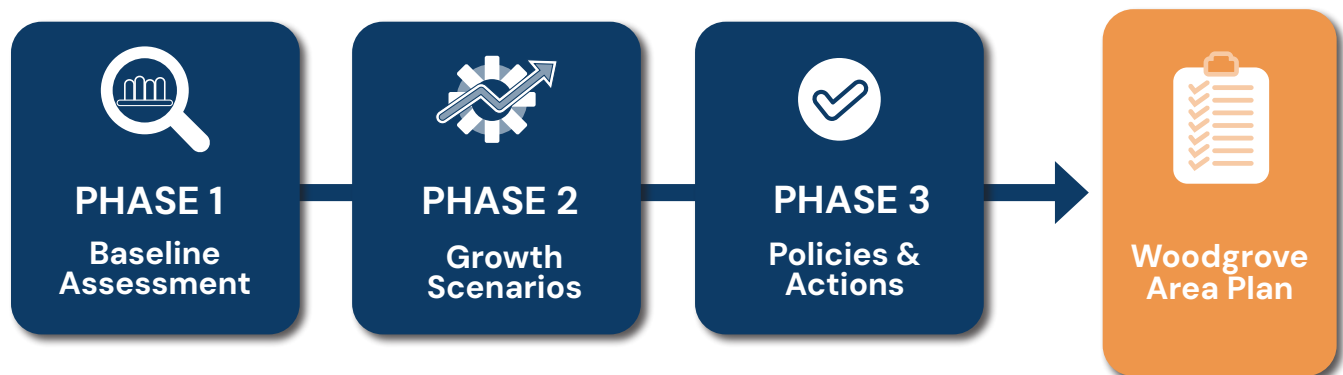
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

The *What We Heard: Phase 2 Engagement Summary Report* presents the findings from the second public engagement for the Woodgrove Area Plan (WAP), a key component of Nanaimo’s broader initiative to develop complete communities in its urban centres. This report builds upon the feedback from Phase 1 and synthesizes the perspectives of over 440 participants. It outlines their preferred growth scenario for the Woodgrove Urban Centre and key themes that arose.



PROJECT CONTEXT & PURPOSE

The Woodgrove Area Plan is designed to transform the Woodgrove Urban Centre—Nanaimo’s northern gateway and a major commercial hub—into a more complete, livable, and accessible community. This initiative is funded by a Complete Communities grant through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, supporting evidence-based land use planning with a focus on housing, transportation, daily needs, and infrastructure. The engagement process aims to inform land-use decisions, assess community completeness, identify challenges and opportunities, and align with broader city and provincial objectives.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS & PARTICIPATION

Phase 2 engagement included an online survey, virtual workshops, and classroom sessions, reaching 443 participants. Much like Phase 1, most participants were Nanaimo residents, with representation from nearby jurisdictions. Respondents were predominantly women, homeowners, and aged 20–65, though youth and teenagers were notably underrepresented.*

Outreach efforts included social media, bus posters, and a newspaper ad, resulting in high visibility and diverse input.

**1,742 PEOPLE
DIRECTLY ENGAGED
TO DATE (PHASE 1&2)**



64% Nanaimo residents

13% Woodgrove Area

**7% Regional District of Nanaimo or
District of Lantzville**

16% Other/Did not answer

**Although youth and teenagers did not respond to the survey, youth were engaged via classroom sessions at elementary schools. Efforts were made to directly engage with highschool students through classroom sessions but were unsuccessful.*

GROWTH SCENARIOS

Phase 2 explores the implications of residential and commercial growth in the Woodgrove Urban Centre. This phase integrates baseline data and community feedback to evaluate how differing approaches to land use, mobility, and amenities could shape the future of Woodgrove as a vibrant, mixed-use urban centre. Three growth scenarios were analyzed to test options and identify tradeoffs, ensuring that future planning decisions are informed by both evidence and public input.

CATEGORY	PARAMETER	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	SCENARIO 3
HORIZON YEAR		10 years (2035)	20 years (2045)	30 years (2055)
POPULATION, HOUSING & RETAIL	New Population	2,500 people	5,000 people	7,500 people
	New Housing Units	1,274 units	2,548 units	3,823 units
	New Retail Space	40,000 ft ²	80,000 ft ²	120,000 ft ²

PREFERRED SCENARIO

Of all three scenarios, participants were most supportive of Scenario 3, which depicted growth for 7,500 residents over the next 30 years.

NEXT STEPS

The feedback from Phase 2 will inform the development of policy and design guideline recommendations and the preferred vision for the Woodgrove Area Plan. Continued community engagement will ensure that the evolving plan reflects local priorities, addresses identified challenges, and supports the creation of a vibrant, complete community.

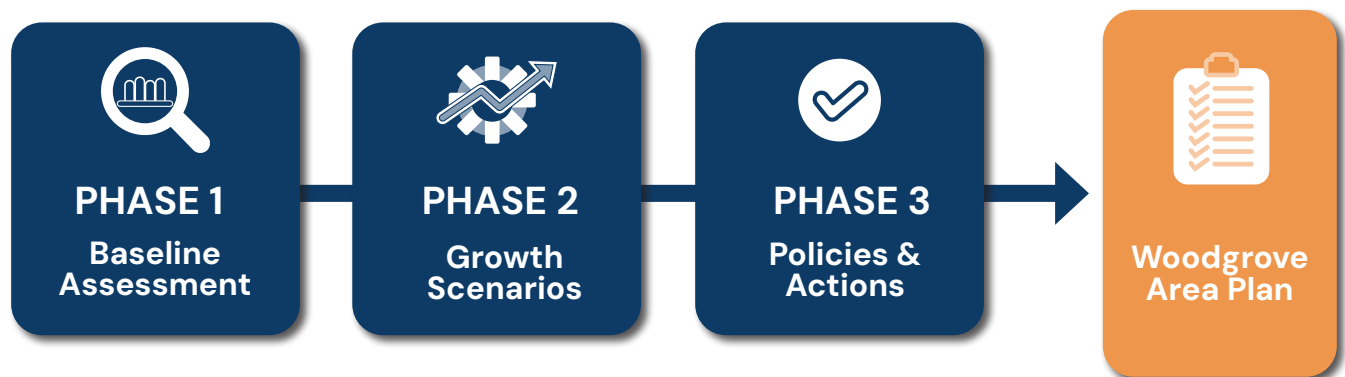
This summary encapsulates the main findings and strategic direction emerging from the second phase of engagement, setting the stage for further collaborative planning and decision-making in the Woodgrove area.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WOODGROVE AREA PLAN

The Woodgrove Area Plan (WAP) is part of a broader initiative aimed at developing complete communities in Nanaimo's urban centres. Its context is rooted in *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* (*City Plan*) which identifies six Secondary Urban Centres, including Woodgrove. This area is envisioned as a primary hub of activity characterized by high-intensity land uses and mixed-use development. Recognized as Nanaimo's northern gateway, the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre serves both city-wide and regional commercial functions.

The City of Nanaimo and Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) were awarded a \$200,000 Complete Communities grant to fund an assessment that would support the transformation of Woodgrove into a complete community. This assessment is comprised of three phases that explore growth scenarios to achieve implementation recommendations for the WAP:



COMPLETE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Complete Communities Program is a \$10 million grant initiative designed to support local governments and modern Treaty First Nations in British Columbia in developing more comprehensive and integrated community environments. Grant recipients are enabled to conduct in-depth assessments of community development to determine future growth scenarios.

The program's core focus is to help communities evaluate their "completeness" through four critical lenses; housing, transportation, daily needs, and infrastructure. By supporting evidence-based land use planning, the initiative aims to create more compact, efficient, and livable communities that align with broader provincial goals, such as the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030. Local governments (i.e. the City of Nanaimo) can use these grants to undertake comprehensive assessments that inform strategic decision-making about community development, housing supply, transportation options, and more.

STUDY AREA

The Woodgrove Urban Centre is located in the northwest area of the City of Nanaimo. It functions as the City's northern gateway, sharing boundaries with the Regional District of Nanaimo and the District of Lantzville. The area includes the Woodgrove Centre mall and its surrounding lands.



The Woodgrove Urban Centre is designated as a Secondary Urban Centre in *City Plan*. Secondary Urban Centres are intended to be large scale urban centres that serve the entire city. They are characterized as being anchored by public or civic institutions and employment centres, offer a broad range of housing types, have excellent transit access and walking, rolling, and cycling routes.

PHASE 1 – BASELINE

Phase 1 of the project focused on establishing a clear understanding of the current context of the Woodgrove Urban Centre. This culminated in the *Phase 1: Baseline Assessment Report*, which examined existing conditions through four critical lenses: housing, access to daily needs, transportation, and infrastructure. Insights on the findings were gathered from the community and summarized in the *Phase 1: Engagement Summary Report*.

PHASE 2 – GROWTH SCENARIOS

Phase 2 explores the implications of residential and commercial growth in the Woodgrove Urban Centre. This phase integrates baseline data and community feedback to evaluate how differing approaches to land use, mobility, and amenities could shape the future of Woodgrove as a vibrant, mixed-use urban centre. Three growth scenarios were analyzed to test options and identify tradeoffs, ensuring that future planning decisions are informed by both evidence and public input.

The growth parameters that were applied to all three scenarios are summarized below. They include new population and retail space that span a 30-year time horizon. To align with *City Plan* policy and complete community goals, a mixed-use housing form with ground-floor retail was an assumed parameter.

Additional parameters were tested for each of the Complete Communities Assessment lenses as they relate to transportation, access to daily needs and infrastructure. These parameters were used to gain an understanding of how additional growth impacts these lenses, and to inform future actions and policies to create a complete community.

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CATEGORY	PARAMETER	SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2	SCENARIO 3
LENSES				
TRANSPORTATION	Mode Split	» 85% auto » 10% active » 5% transit	» 80.5% auto » 13% active » 6.5% transit	» 76% auto » 16% active » 8% transit
	Transit Network	Routes per Transit Redevelopment Strategy & Frequency increased for each Scenario to achieve <i>City Plan</i> targets (see Table 1 for transit frequency assumptions).		
	Woodgrove Exchange	Current Location	Island Hwy/Aulds Rd/Hammond Bay Rd intersection	
	New Active Transportation Infrastructure & Road Connections	Bowers District roads	Scenario 1 + complete Ring Road + two new multi-use paths	Scenario 2 + Woodgrove Boulevard + two new multi-use paths
ACCESS TO DAILY NEEDS	Daycares	» No additional daycares	» One new daycare	» No additional daycares beyond that in Scenario 2
	Employment Options	» No new employment options	» New employment options relate to new retail space proposed	» New employment options relate to new retail space proposed
	Grocery Stores	» No additional grocery stores	» No additional grocery stores	» No additional grocery stores
	Parks & Open Spaces	» One new park & open space	» Five new parks & open spaces	» No additional parks added beyond those in Scenario 2
	Pharmacies	» No additional pharmacies	» No additional pharmacies	» No additional pharmacies
	Recreation & Cultural Facilities	» No new recreation and culture facility	» New recreational & cultural facility » 90,000 ft ² - 155,000 ft ²	
	Schools	» None	» One new school	
INFRASTRUCTURE	Sanitary Sewer System	» Per Capita Sewer Flow: 230 litres /capital / day » Infiltration: 2500 litres / hectare / day		
	Water System	» Minimum Residual Pressure (PHD) 300 kPa (44 psi) » Minimum Residual Pressure (hydrant) (MDD+FF) 150 kPa (22 psi) » Minimum Residual Pressure (system) (MDD+FF)- 35 kPa (5 psi) » Maximum Velocity MDD+FF – 3.5 m/s		
	Stormwater System	» Stormwater Management Model (SWMM) model calibrated using rainfall data collected by the City. » Subcatchment slope were determined directly using LiDAR		

HOW & WHY ARE WE ENGAGING?

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

As part of the Complete Communities assessment to create the WAP, public input is requested during each phase of the process to shape qualitative understanding of the Woodgrove Area and to offer feedback on the outcomes.

This *Engagement Summary Report* summarizes what was heard in the second phase of the Complete Communities process, as outlined below:

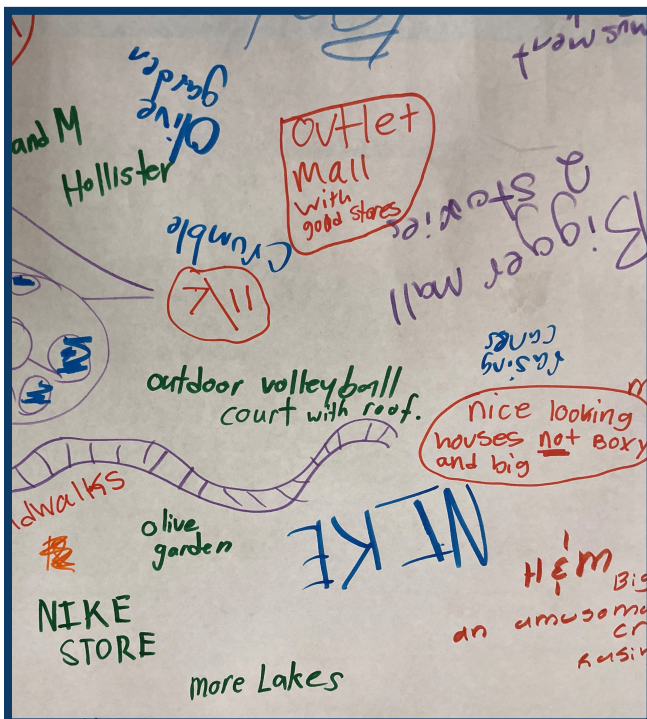


PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of engagement during the WAP process is to facilitate a collaborative, inclusive, and transparent process for conducting a Complete Communities Assessment.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Inform land-use decisions and plans for transportation and infrastructure improvements in the Woodgrove area
- ▶ Explore opportunities to create a more compact, complete, and accessible neighbourhood
- ▶ Assess the current community completeness of the Woodgrove area
- ▶ Identify strengths, opportunities, challenges, and potential actions that align with community goals
- ▶ Engage effectively with neighbouring jurisdictions and other affected parties
- ▶ Evaluate housing needs, supply, and location in the Woodgrove area
- ▶ Assess current and future connections between destinations through transit and active transportation
- ▶ Determine services required in the region to support a complete community
- ▶ Inform the implementation of *City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined*
- ▶ Explore options for a new location for a permanent bus exchange in the Woodgrove area
- ▶ Align with the Transit-Oriented Areas (TOA) legislation requirements



LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT (IAP2 APPROACH)

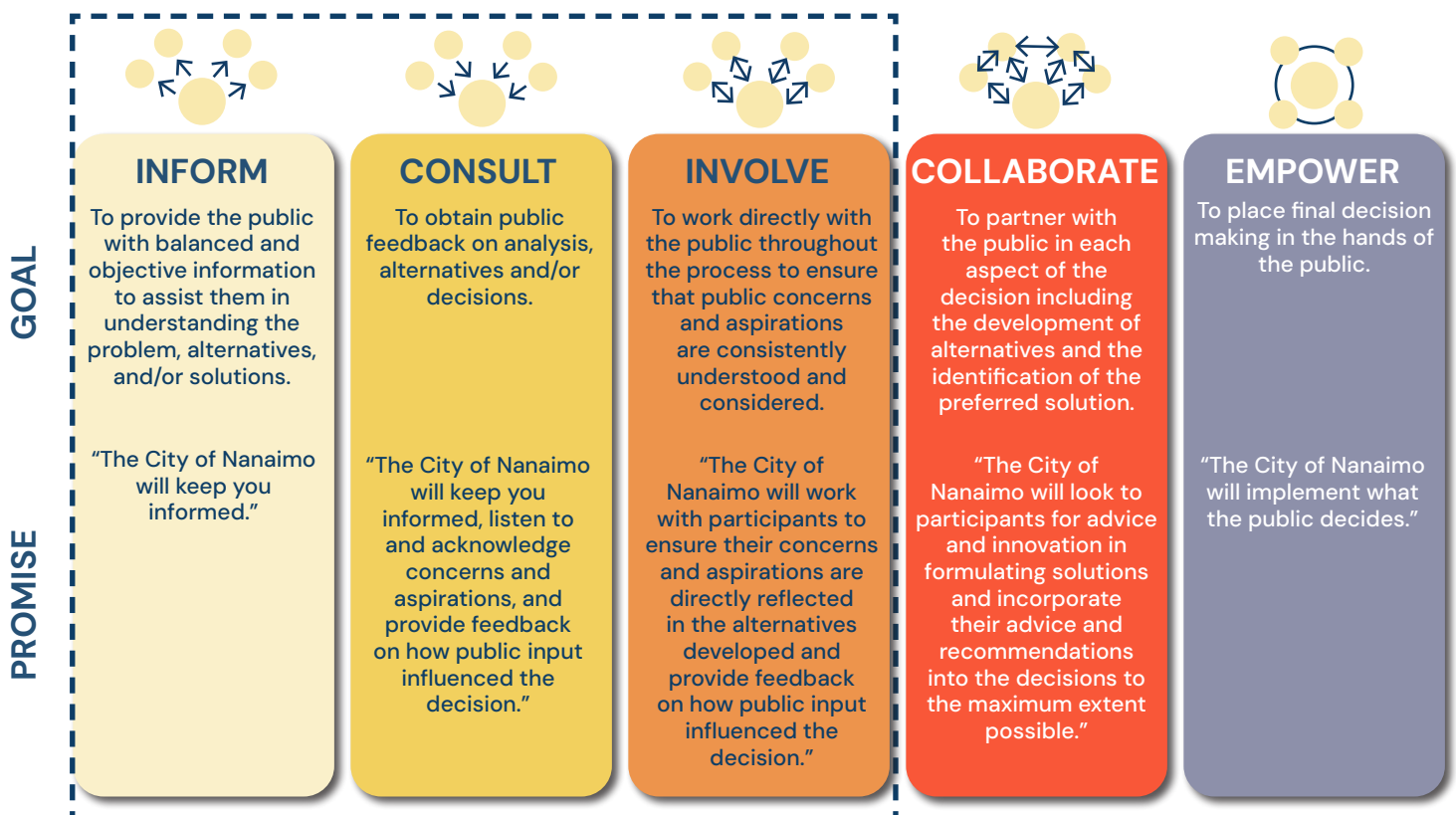
The engagement process for the WAP incorporates International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles throughout its various stages, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to public participation:

- ▶ maintaining clarity of purpose,
- ▶ ensuring inclusive participation,
- ▶ providing consistent feedback loops,
- ▶ promoting transparency, and
- ▶ building community capacity.

By adhering to these principles, the WAP can transform public engagement from a procedural requirement into a genuine opportunity for community empowerment and collaborative urban planning.

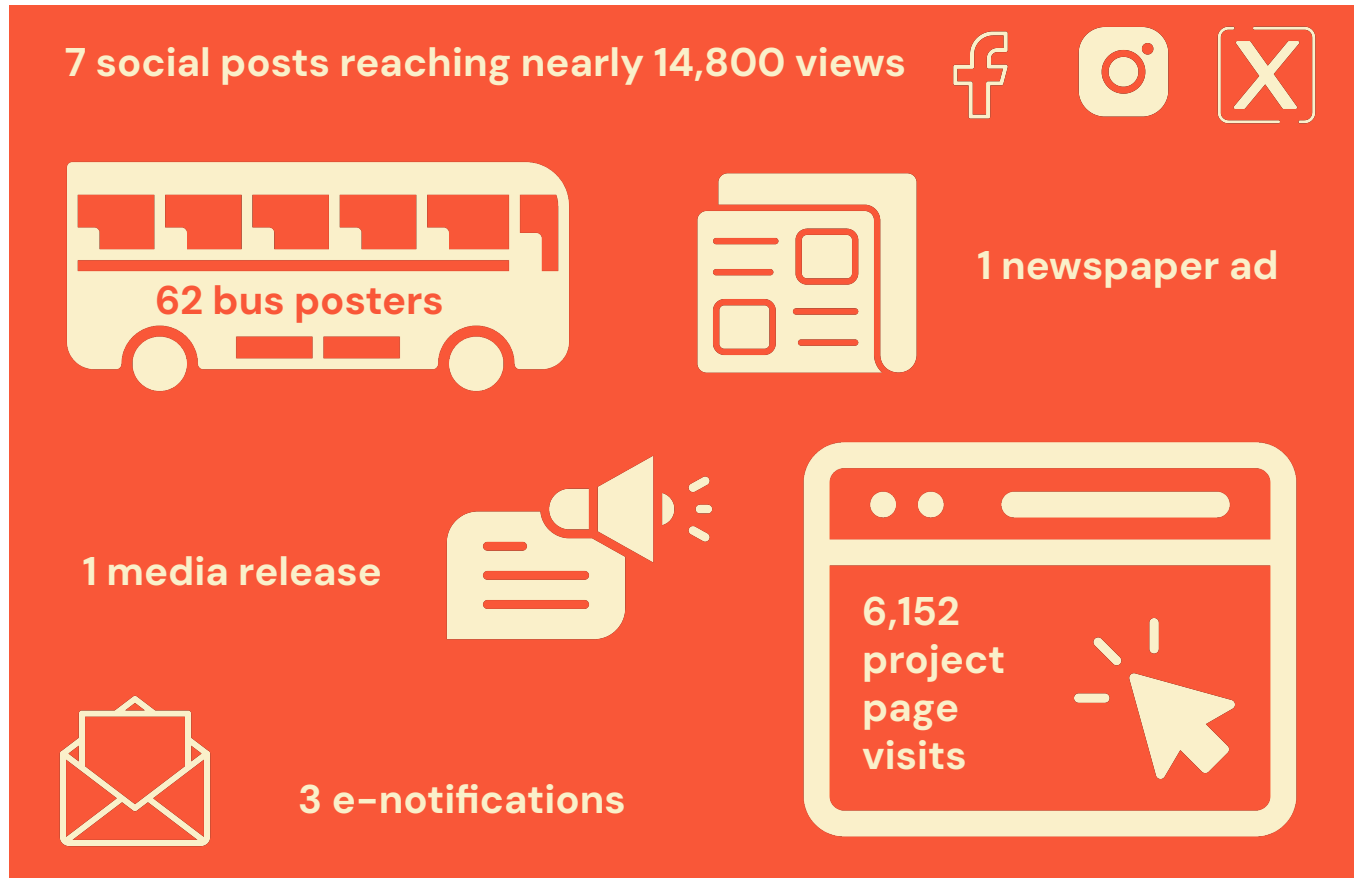
The process begins at the “Inform” level of the IAP2 spectrum, providing balanced and objective information to help community members understand the issues, alternatives, and potential solutions related to the Complete Communities work. As the process progresses, it will move into the “Consult” and “Involve” levels of the spectrum. The Project Team will obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and decisions through structured feedback mechanisms such as surveys and focus group discussions.

3 ENGAGEMENT LEVELS TO BE USED IN WAP



OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

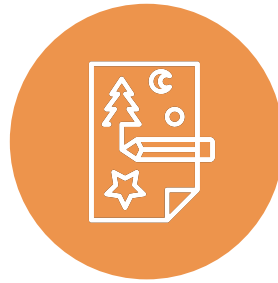
The City of Nanaimo promoted engagement opportunities for Phase 2 through various formats, aiming to reach as wide of an audience as possible.



ENGAGEMENT METHODS & EVENTS

443 were engaged through the following activities and methods:

- ▶ Online & hardcopy survey x 1
- ▶ Virtual Workshops x 2
- ▶ Classroom sessions x 2



1,742 PEOPLE
DIRECTLY ENGAGED
TO DATE (PHASE 1&2)

WHO PARTICIPATED?

BY THE NUMBERS

A total of 445 people participated in the Woodgrove area engagement process for Phase 2, comprising 303 survey respondents, 52 workshop attendees across three sessions, and approximately 90 children from two school groups who participated in three classroom activities.

Survey demographics for Phase 2 yielded similar results as Phase 1; respondents were primarily Nanaimo residents who visit Woodgrove for shopping, activities, services, or transit purposes. 37 survey respondents noted they lived within the study area. The age distribution was balanced between 20–65+ years, though youth and teenagers were notably underrepresented again. Participants were predominantly women. Non-Nanaimo participants primarily came from the Regional District of Nanaimo and the District of Lantzville. About 6 to 10% of survey respondents elected not to provide demographic information, depending on what was asked.

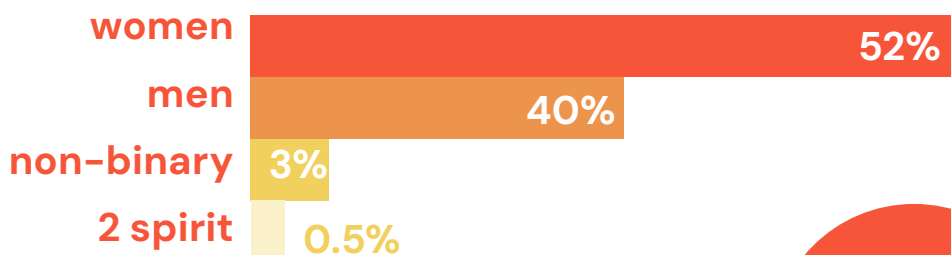


64% Nanaimo residents

13% Woodgrove Area

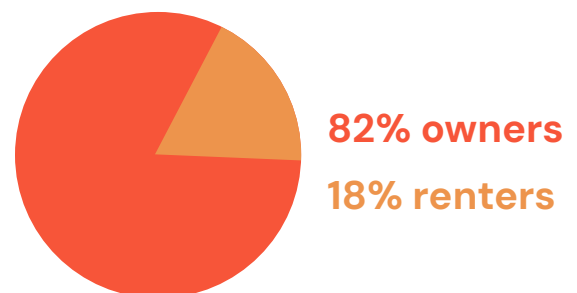
7% Regional District of Nanaimo or District of Lantzville

16% Other/Did not answer



99% aged 20 to 65+ years old

teenagers notably underrepresented in survey responses, workshop attendance & classroom sessions



82% owners

18% renters

WHAT WE ASKED

SURVEY & VIRTUAL SESSIONS

Both the online survey and the virtual sessions began by providing information on the project process to date, followed by the details for each of the three growth scenarios from Phase 2. Given the complexity of the analysis, information was broken out into several sections:

- ▶ **What We Assumed**; assumptions that were applied to each scenario that impact future growth.
- ▶ **What We Found**; results from the analysis and changes that would need to happen to accommodate future growth.
- ▶ **Community Completeness**; levels and limitations of achieving a complete community should the changes happen to accommodate future growth.

Tables and Figures followed each section to depict the analysis for the scenarios, showing future changes to the road network, mobility infrastructure, transit network, and number of additional daily needs destinations.

PROMPTS

Participants were asked broadly for their thoughts on each scenario's findings, and what changes they would like to see prioritized in each scenario in terms of transportation, access to daily needs, and infrastructure.

COMMUNITY COMPLETENESS

Scenario 1 achieves a limited level of community completeness.



Scenario 2 achieves a moderate level of community completeness.



Scenario 3 achieves the highest level of community completeness.

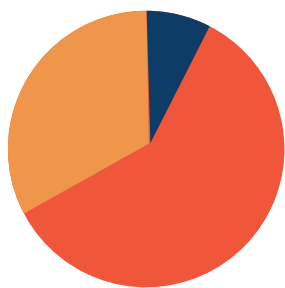


WHAT WE LEARNED

PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

Of all three scenarios, participants were most supportive of Scenario 3, which depicted growth for 7,500 residents over the next 30 years. The below quotes and graphs indicate participant sentiment.

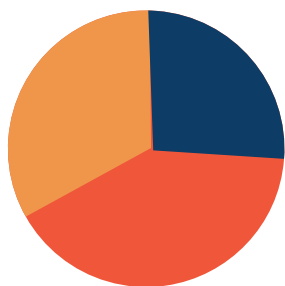
SCENARIO 1



7% supportive
31% indifferent
62% unsupportive

"I suspect the regional population will be larger than 2500 – not really worth making minor adjustments if it's likely they will need to be expanded in only a few years. I'd like to see much more reduction of car-dependent access than this model includes"

SCENARIO 2



28% supportive
33% indifferent
39% unsupportive

"Much better thought-through but limitations speak for themselves"

SCENARIO 3



38% supportive
31% indifferent
30% unsupportive

"I like this one a lot. I think it would be great to break up the Woodgrove shopping centre with roads and further densification to make it a real urban centre. Love the connectability. Love that it creates more much-needed housing too."

KEY THEMES

Across all comments and scenarios, various topics arose, with many comments surrounding transportation and transit options. This could be due to the figures presented, as there were more maps pertaining to transportation and mobility than other lenses. Some participants also vocalized their frustration about the survey format and confusion with the complex information presented.

HOUSING

Concerns About Density & Development Impact

Residents were divided on density. Some saw it as necessary for creating complete communities and meeting housing needs, while others fear it will lead to congestion, loss of privacy, and strain on infrastructure. There's a call for balanced growth that considers existing neighborhoods and avoids overwhelming local services. Many asked for thoughtful planning that includes schools, healthcare, and community services to support increased population.

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Persistent Car Dependency & Frustration with Transit Limitations

Despite efforts to promote walking, cycling, and transit, many residents feel that Nanaimo's spread-out layout, hilly terrain, and inadequate transit service make car travel indispensable, especially in the Woodgrove area. While some support alternative transportation, a significant portion of the public feels that cars remain essential, especially for families, seniors, and those commuting long distances. Concerns include insufficient parking, poor transit frequency, and impracticality of cycling or walking for daily errands. There is a strong sentiment that planning should reflect the realities of daily life rather than idealistic visions of car-free living.

Desire for Integrated Mobility Networks

Residents expressed strong support for integrated mobility systems that connect neighborhoods, commercial hubs, and transit centers. Many emphasized the importance of multimodal routes that allow for seamless transitions between walking, cycling, and public transit. The idea of "mini hubs" and looped transit routes was well received, especially when they reduce travel time and improve access to daily needs.

Additionally, respondents appreciated proposals that linked existing infrastructure (such as Metral Drive and the Parkway Trail) to key destinations like Woodgrove Mall. These connections were seen as essential to reducing car dependency and fostering more sustainable travel behaviors.

Demand for Accessible Transit Services

Residents recognize the need for better transit and support upgrades that make it more accessible, frequent, and connected. While many are critical of current transit options, there is strong support for improvements such as relocating the transit hub, increasing frequency, adding bus pullouts, and integrating with regional transit systems. However, they caution against relocating transit hubs to congested intersections and emphasize the importance of planning for all users, including those with mobility challenges.

Strong Support for Intentional Cycling & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Residents want more walkable and bike-friendly communities, but they emphasize that infrastructure must be thoughtfully designed. There is widespread support for expanding cycling and pedestrian networks, but many stressed the need for safe, connected, and practical infrastructure. Safety, connectivity, and integration with existing routes are key to encouraging active transportation. Poorly designed or disconnected infrastructure is seen as ineffective and potentially dangerous.

Some respondents noted that cycling infrastructure should be inclusive, accommodating all ages and abilities. They emphasized that without proper design and amenities, bike lanes may be underutilized, especially in areas with challenging terrain or inclement weather.

Safety for Vulnerable Road Users

Safety was a top priority, especially for children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Residents called for protected crossings, traffic calming measures, and better lighting at intersections. Ensuring safe routes to schools, parks, and transit stops was seen as essential. Some respondents suggested separating pedestrian and cycling traffic from vehicle lanes, using overpasses or underpasses to reduce conflict. Others emphasized the need for enforcement of traffic laws, particularly for cyclists and drivers in busy areas.

ACCESS TO DAILY NEEDS

Need for Green Spaces

Green spaces were consistently highlighted as essential for mental health, recreation, and social interaction. Many felt current provisions were inadequate for the projected population growth and emphasized the importance of community gathering spaces. These amenities are viewed as vital to creating vibrant, inclusive neighborhoods.

Residents called for more parks, natural areas, and re-naturalized zones, especially in high-density areas. Suggestions included dog-friendly parks, shaded seating, and covered outdoor areas for year-round use.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of integrating green space into urban design; not just as isolated parks, but as part of a broader open space network. This approach was seen as key to mitigating the urban heat island effect and enhancing the aesthetic and ecological value of the community.

Need for Recreation & Cultural Infrastructure

Beyond parks, residents expressed interest in recreation centers, pools, skating rinks, and cultural spaces. These facilities were seen as important for community health, social engagement, and economic vitality. Respondents suggested multi-use centers with flexible spaces for classes, performances, and gatherings.

There was also a desire for public art, plazas, and spaces that reflect local culture and heritage. These elements were viewed as essential for creating a sense of place and attracting visitors, while also serving the needs of residents.

NEXT STEPS

Phase 3 of the Woodgrove Area Plan will leverage the data and feedback gathered in Phases 1 and 2 to explore and refine the emerging policies and actions, and to develop recommendations for supporting policies, design guidelines, actions, and monitoring framework. This information will be formulated into a technical document to meet the requirements of the Complete Communities grant and the *Woodgrove Area Plan*. The public will be re-engaged on their level of support for the recommended policies and actions.



