

NANAIMO DOWNTOWN PLAN REFERENCE DOCUMENT

April 2002

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INTRODUCTION



The Nanaimo Downtown Plan builds on objectives that have been worked on for years and provides substance to the vision that has emerged through the creation of implementable policies. It includes a series of objectives, principles, policies, concepts and actions to guide Downtown development and revitalization over the next five to ten years and beyond. In presenting a broad range of policies and an optimistic future vision, the Plan seeks to raise expectations about the Downtown's potential. It addresses a number of changes that have occurred in the Downtown since 1993, when the last Plan was prepared.

The Downtown Plan forms part of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan (OCP) that was enacted July 8, 1996. It fits the long term community growth strategy set out in the OCP of focusing development inside Town Centres and Neighbourhood Villages, and seeks to ensure that future land use decisions contribute to the achievement of the City's social, economic and environmental goals.

The City wide OCP addresses broader community issues, while this Plan is used for the area defined as Downtown Nanaimo.

1.1 Plan Overview

This Plan represents the culmination of many years of careful consideration of the Downtown area. Ever since the impact on Downtown of the sub-urbanization of Nanaimo was acknowledged in the late 80's, there has been growing concern that Downtown is in serious decline. It is of concern that Downtown businesses are finding it increasingly difficult to operate successfully. It is also disappointing that such a unique and historically important place, in what can be accurately described as a fantastic natural setting, is in danger of losing its attractiveness to residents and visitors.

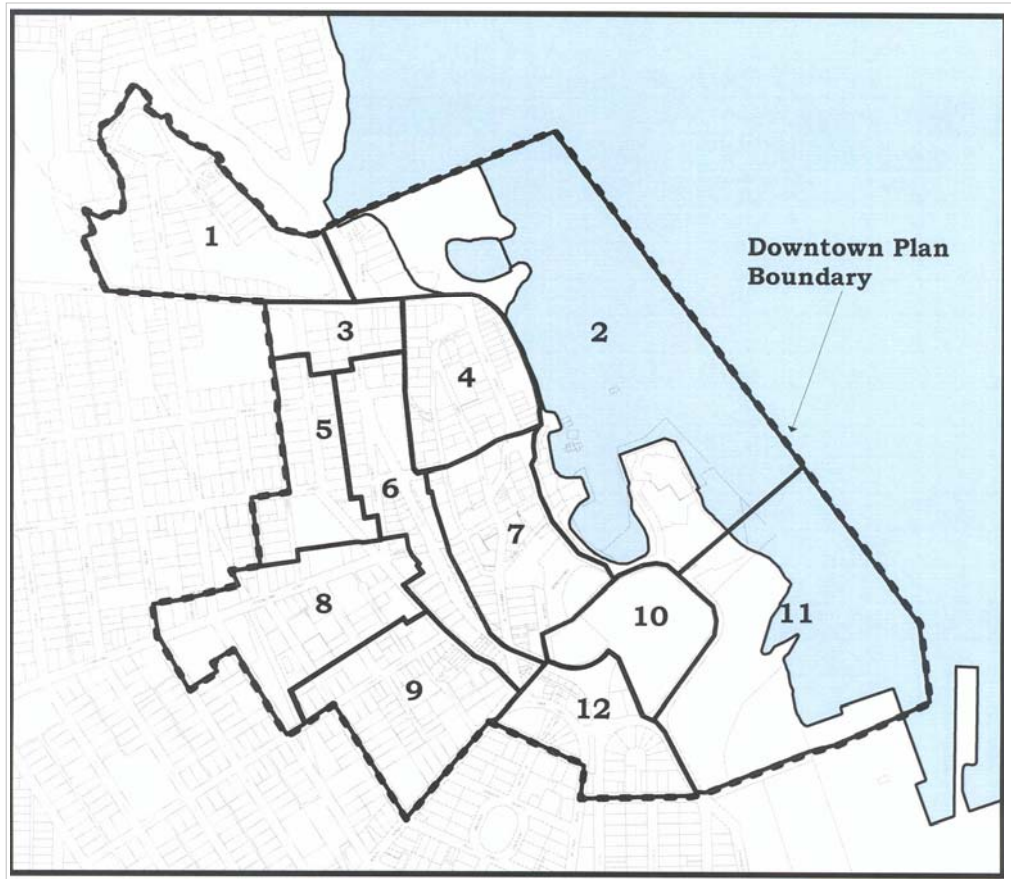
The City has been taking steps to reverse those trends. It has initiated such actions as the approval of the Cameron Island high density residential development, the development of the new theatre and arts complex, the recent removal of development cost charges from Downtown developments and, currently, the pursuit of positive actions to achieve a new trade and convention centre combined with a new hotel on the significant Malaspina Hotel site.

Despite these actions the Downtown economy still lacks the energy in 2002 to generate the scale of private investment needed to bring about desired change and to obtain the improvements which most people seek for the area.

While the vision encompassed in the Downtown Plan will take many years to fulfill, the plan sets out a policy environment and numerous actions that will stimulate Downtown rehabilitation.

1.2 Downtown and Character Area Boundaries

The Downtown and Character Area boundaries are shown on the map below. The Plan builds on the diversity in the Downtown by recognizing and reinforcing the strengths of each particular character area.



Twelve distinct areas have been defined with the boundaries based on historic, geographic, land use, demographic and functional characteristics.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Future Study Area #1 | <i>Uses to be determined</i> |
| 2. Waterfront | <i>Public access and enjoyment</i> |
| 3. North Gate | <i>Welcome and please come again</i> |
| 4. Chapel Front | <i>Urban housing with high-rise</i> |
| 5. Wallace | <i>Residential office edge</i> |
| 6. Terminal Parkway | <i>A Parkway of trees</i> |
| 7. Core | <i>Historic City Centre</i> |
| 8. Fitzwilliam | <i>Old town variety</i> |
| 9. Quennell Square | <i>Office, community service, business and housing</i> |
| 10. Harbourpark | <i>Shopping anchor and connector</i> |
| 11. Future Study Area #2 | <i>Uses to be determined</i> |
| 12. South Gate | <i>Welcome and please come again</i> |

1.3 Preparation of the Plan

A Concept Plan for Downtown Nanaimo was originally prepared and presented in 1993; however, the Plan was not formally adopted by the City. A review of the Plan in 2001 suggested that, with certain updates and refinements, it remained largely valid.

Following several studies and work done by a variety of Downtown revitalization committees and workshops, the City and stakeholders in the Downtown reviewed and prioritized a variety of directions and actions that they believed would bring vitality back to Downtown. The actions identified as essential to revitalizing the Downtown were grouped under three Downtown strategies:

- ❑ Increase the number of people living Downtown, by encouraging additional residential development;
- ❑ Create a unique niche for Downtown by positioning the area as a centre for arts and culture activities; and
- ❑ Increase the number of people working in Downtown, by building a strong business base in the Downtown core.

An important component of Downtown revitalization is to create a stable policy environment within which the private sector can consider investment decisions. A new Concept Plan, completed in November 2001, was prepared for Downtown Nanaimo as a first step for examining and updating policies affecting development.

This document focuses on the reformatting of the Concept Plan into an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment bylaw and prepares the groundwork for developing new zoning regulations that will guide future development in the Downtown.

This is the final stage of the Downtown Plan process, involving reviews with stakeholders and a statutory public hearing and City Council adoption of the Plan as an amendment to the existing OCP Bylaw. Once Council has adopted the new Plan, an implementation process will be undertaken.

1.4 Plan Organization

The Nanaimo Downtown Plan is organized into six chapters, followed by three appendices:

1. **Introduction.** This chapter outlines the purpose, rationale, boundaries, Plan preparation and organization of the Plan.
2. **Context.** This chapter provides information on the context, history of development, demographics, past planning efforts, land use distribution, and a brief overview of the trends, issues and opportunities.
3. **Vision and Concept.** This chapter presents a vision of the desired future Downtown. The overall development concept and planning principles are outlined in this chapter.
4. **Policies and Actions.** This chapter is the core of the Plan, containing the policy direction that will guide Downtown development over the next five to ten years. The chapter is organized by subject area, starting with Economic Development. Each of the nine sections contains a general description, an overall objective and a series of policies and actions.
5. **Land Use and Form of Development.** This chapter contains the objectives and policies to guide the distribution of varying land uses and activities, shape, height and density of development in the Downtown and in each of the Downtown areas. It sets the direction for new zoning and design guidelines.
6. **Plan Implementation.** This chapter presents the City's incentives to support Downtown revitalization, budget and financing strategy for the Plan, the City's streamlined review process, the Downtown Action Program and monitoring of the Plan's outcomes.



This chapter provides information on the context, history of development, demographics, land use distribution, past planning efforts, and an overview of trends, issues and opportunities in the Downtown.

2.1 History of Development

Nanaimo was born as a coal town. In fact, in 1852 the Hudson's Bay Company first started mining in the area. The HBC settlement, on what is today Downtown Nanaimo, was named Colviletown after Andrew Colville, the Governor of the HBC. Early Colviletown developed in close proximity to the mine workings and consisted of a sawmill on the Millstone River, wharves for loading coal and log cabins and bunkhouses. Over the next ten years, the town grew haphazardly with the mine and the shoreline governing its pattern of growth. Shops and businesses lined the rough roads named Commercial, Wharf and Bastion Streets. In 1860, the town was renamed Nanaimo (derived from Snunéymuxw) and in 1862, the HBC sold their mine interests and the town to the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, a British-owned conglomerate. The deal included the mines, buildings and 6,193 acres of land.

The new company, under the management of Charles Nicol, very quickly instituted more order to the physical layout of the town. In 1864, the company hired an architect in Britain, George Deverill, to draft a town plan based on topographical maps of the area. Deverill gave Nanaimo one of its more distinctive features, the fan shaped pattern of the Downtown streets. Rather than section the town into a grid of regular rectangles, the streets follow the natural downward slope and bowl formation of the land. In the case of Nanaimo, the radial plan leads the traveler to the primary business district and towards the natural beauty of the harbour. The town plan

was the initial step towards Nanaimo's eventual incorporation in 1874.



"Credit: Nanaimo Community Archives"

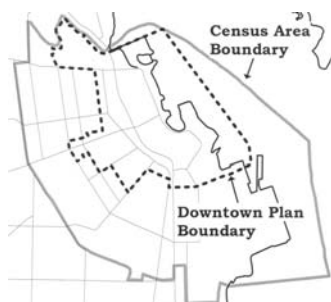
Mining was also significant in reshaping of Nanaimo's shoreline and harbour. Mine tailings were used to expand the land area along the waterfront and fill in the tidal ravine inlet that once divided the Downtown along Terminal Avenue. The filling and shaping of the waterfront has continued into the 20th century with the most recent additions of Swy-A-Lana Park (1984) and the waterfront promenades (begun in 1988).

Nanaimo has seen significant change since the 1960s. At that time, the Downtown was the city's major commercial area. Nanaimo had an economy based on natural resources, primarily forestry and fishing. Until the 1970s, Nanaimo's growth was slow but steady. Nanaimo's "small town" atmosphere changed with amalgamation in 1975. Commercial mall development spread new shopping areas north along the Island Highway and, as with many North American cities, Nanaimo suffered from suburbanization, auto dependency and a deteriorating Downtown core.

2.2 Downtown Community Profile

For the purposes of the demographic and income distribution sections, the Downtown boundary includes the 'Old City Neighbourhood' and part of the 'Southend Neighbourhood' area as defined in Figure 2.2.0. This is to include residents within the City Centre planning area and to accommodate 1996 Census Enumeration Area boundaries.

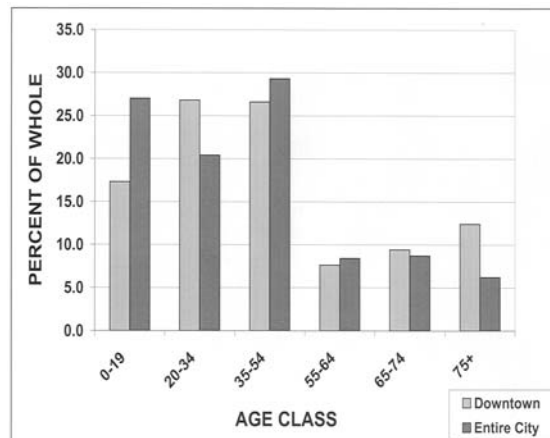
Figure 2.2.0 – Census Area



Downtown Demographics

The population of Downtown Nanaimo at the time of the 1996 Census was 4405 or 6.3% of the city's total population. The characteristics of the age distribution of Downtown residents differ from that of the city as a whole. The component of Downtown residents under the age of 19 is significantly less than that of the city as a whole as seen in Figure 2.2.1. Those 20 to 34 years of age make up a larger portion of the population Downtown when compared to the city as a whole. Additionally, the component of Downtown residents over 75 years of age is substantially greater than that of the entire city.

Figure 2.2.1 – Age Distribution (1996)



Downtown Income Distribution

The average income for households in the Downtown (\$31,228 - 1995 census figure) is lower than that of the city as a whole (\$45,133 - 1995 census figure). This significant difference in income is not surprising, as almost 50% of the Downtown's households are single person households. The average income for a single person household is \$20,353 as compared to \$24,049 city-wide. There are also many more single parent families in the Downtown than there are city-wide; 27% as compared to 17.5%. As one might expect, these two segments of the greater population are in part drawn to the Downtown because of its affordable housing stock.

Downtown Development

In 2001, 57 building permits, at a value of \$5.6 million were issued for projects in the Downtown. This represents 8.9% of all building permits issued for the City of Nanaimo, while representing 21% of commercial building permits for the city.

Downtown Tax Revenue

The Downtown Plan area represents almost 6% of the City's overall tax revenue base. Almost 78% of the tax revenue generated in the Downtown Plan area comes from the business tax base, with the vast majority of the remaining 22% derived from residential taxes. The Downtown Plan area accounts for more than 16% of the taxes generated by the City's business tax base. This tax revenue comparison considers only the municipal portion of property taxes, and excludes School District, Hospital and other taxes.

Downtown Businesses

For the purposes of this section, Business Improvement Areas 1 through 5 serve as the Downtown boundary. A detailed breakdown of the type of businesses which exists in the Downtown can be seen in Figure 2.2.1.

Retail trade businesses make up the largest proportion of Downtown businesses (21.6%), equivalent to 16.8% of retail trade businesses within the City of Nanaimo. Arts, entertainment and recreation businesses formed 2.4% of Downtown businesses, while forming 37.5% of such businesses city wide. This suggests that the Downtown serves an important role within the city as an arts, entertainment and recreation hub. Businesses in the Downtown also constitute a significant component of the city's accommodation and food services, and finance and insurance business sectors.

While the number of public administration businesses were not available for the city as a whole, it has been estimated that this sector comprises 4.5% of Downtown businesses.

Figure 2.2.1

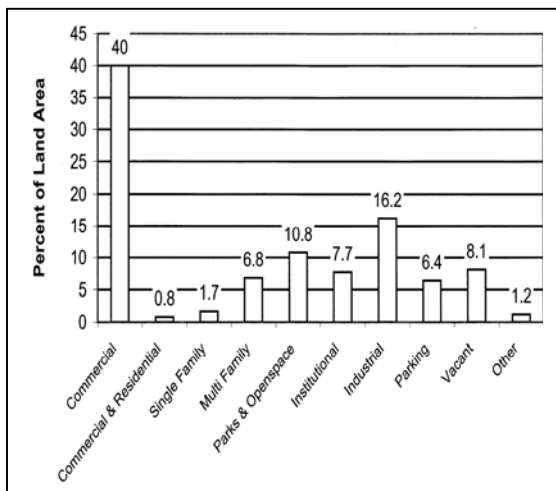
Type of Business	Number	Percent of Downtown As	
		Downtown Total	a Percent of City-wide
Accommodation & Food Services	67	10.8	26.7
Administrative & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	44	7.1	15.3
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4	0.6	36.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	15	2.4	37.5
Construction	12	1.9	1.6
Educational Services	5	0.8	7.6
Finance & Insurance	37	6.0	27.2
Health Care & Social Assistance	66	10.6	15.5
Information & Cultural Industries	6	1.0	17.6
Manufacturing	19	3.1	13.3
Other Services	70	11.3	17.8
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	83	13.4	18.2
Public Administration	28	4.5	-
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	20	3.2	4.0
Retail Trade	134	21.6	16.8
Transportation & Warehousing	6	1.0	4.4
Utilities	1	0.2	100.0
Wholesale Trade	4	0.6	3.7
TOTAL	621	100.0	

2.3 Past Planning Efforts and Downtown Organization

Existing Land Use

Figure 2.2.2 shows the existing land use in the Downtown Plan area. As might be expected, commercial uses account for the largest single use at 40% of the total land area. Multi-family comprises nearly 7% of the land area with density estimated at 9 unit per hectare in 1996 and parks and open space nearly 11%. The industrial component (16.2%) consists mainly of transportation and manufacturing facilities within Character Area 11 (see Future Study Area #2). Together, vacant land and parking account for 14.5% of the land area.

Figure 2.2.2



Downtown revitalization efforts in the mid '80s began with the implementation of Downtown Design Guidelines in preparation for the Provincially funded Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP). Work under HARP was focused on the Commercial Street business area. Services were upgraded and surface work resulted in pedestrian lighting, street trees, street furniture and decorative sidewalk brickwork. Unfortunately, the focus on the physical design of Downtown was not enough to turn the Downtown economy around.

In 1993, a Downtown Concept Plan was prepared and the Height and Density Study followed in 1994. Both documents have remained as reference documents.

Between 1999 and 2001, an enormous amount of time and energy has been devoted to determining the essential steps for revitalizing Downtown. The National Main Street Centre provided a model for Downtown revitalization that has worked in 1,500 communities across North America. The report, "An Assessment of Downtown Nanaimo's Opportunities for Revitalization", highlights the importance of focusing revitalization efforts on four fronts: restructuring the Downtown economy to create a market niche for retail, business and employment; develop a strong organizational structure to lead revitalization and manage Downtown into the future; concentrate on Downtown design creating a public realm that is an extension of living and working space, and will transform the Downtown into a people friendly, safe and unique destination; and

finally, promote the Downtown as an important community place that must be experienced by residents and visitors, and business owners and employees.

A vision identifying Downtown Nanaimo as a people-friendly unique heart of the city was confirmed by residents and work began on the three strategies intended to assist in achieving the vision:

- ❑ develop the Downtown as an arts, culture and entertainment centre;
- ❑ increase the number of people living Downtown; and
- ❑ increase the number of people working Downtown.

Great progress has been made toward Downtown revitalization through the hard work of many volunteers and Downtown stakeholders. A \$300,000 investment in 2001 and again in 2002 from the Downtown business improvement areas and the City of Nanaimo under a partnership agreement enabled the hiring of a Downtown Executive Director. The Executive Director manages the financial resources and huge amount of social capital directed towards improving the Downtown. The consolidation of arts and culture activities was made possible with the capital investment by the City in the purchase of the CIBC Centre for the Arts building, which also houses the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership office. A Downtown Residential Market Analysis and Downtown Business Recruitment and Retention Study will be completed in 2002. Development cost charges have been removed for Downtown residential development and parking requirements have been decreased. A tax incentive program will be available for conversion of upper storey

heritage buildings for residential use in early 2002.

With the completion of this Plan in the spring of 2002, work will begin on new Downtown zones and design guidelines for each of the character areas for guiding development into the future.

2.4 Trends, Issues and Opportunities

Many downtowns across the country have experienced boom and decline periods throughout their history. In many cases, decisions to locate malls on the edges of town have contributed significantly to the failing health of downtowns and the need to rethink the downtown economic structure and its market niche.

Over the last 15 years, an economic decline occurred in Nanaimo's Downtown as businesses followed the residential market to the north end of the city. Businesses were also attracted to the larger regional market in the northern half of Vancouver Island. This market shift was accompanied by a lengthy slumping provincial economy. The perception of Downtown as a decaying, unsafe environment with nothing to offer was fanned by the lack of attention focused on the Downtown as the centre of the community.

Recently, considerable effort has been made to return the focus to the Downtown with municipal investments into a new theatre and library complex, a proposed convention centre and the purchase of the CIBC building for a Centre of the Arts. Council has made additional capital dollars available for 2002. As well, public/private initiative have resulted in the upgrade of Wesley Street's infrastructure and the creation of the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership.

The revitalization effort has many organizations pooling their resources and providing quality events in the Downtown.

Also, businesses are promoting the Downtown by combining efforts to advertise and promote Downtown businesses. These recent trends are positive initiatives which should intensify the land use activity Downtown over time.

The issues identified as needing attention in the Downtown are similar to many declining downtowns. Parking is almost always cited as a problem (too few spaces; payment required by user rather than shop owner as required at mall locations). Safety is a concern to some since there are fewer people on the streets, properties and streets often look dirty and unkempt, and declining economies often result in social issues such as loitering and prostitution becoming more visible. Poor signage increases the frustration of visitors who have difficulty finding their way around. The loss of necessary services to meet the needs of the local population force Downtown residents to go to other shopping areas and the deteriorating business environment does not encourage new businesses to move Downtown.

Despite trends of decline and issues discouraging Downtown activity, Downtown Nanaimo has important opportunities unique to Downtown. It is well connected to transportation and communication linkages with fibre optic cables in place, seaplane connections to Vancouver and a foot passenger ferry to Vancouver expected in the near future. There is a wide variety of unique shopping, dining, and arts and culture activities within walking distance of each other. The amphitheatre topography and siting on the harbour gives Downtown Nanaimo an

important geographic advantage which is emphasized by the historic character and unique charm of the Old City neighbourhood. The pedestrian scale and sense of community in the Downtown is experienced on narrow winding streets surrounded by low-rise buildings. Commercial and residential properties are affordable and desirable with the proximity to the seawall, library, theatre and other cultural and recreational facilities, and the view of the harbour and mainland mountains. By capitalizing on opportunities to meet some of the needs, the trends can be shifted to bring the vitality back into the Downtown, since decline over the years has not damaged the unique and valued opportunities found in the Downtown.



VISION AND CONCEPT



Over many years, the Downtown community has been developing ideas and concepts for the future Downtown. In 2000, the Downtown Stakeholders Group developed a Vision Statement to summarize their aspirations for Downtown. This statement forms the basis for this Plan and is expanded in this section to describe the planning principles and concepts that aim to achieve the vision.

3.1 Downtown Vision including Planning Principles

The Downtown Vision set out below sees the Downtown as a place that is safe, friendly and alive with people and activity.

Downtown is the heart of the city. It is a people-friendly and unique place because of the harbour, the history evident in heritage sites and its physical design. Downtown attracts residents, businesses, government, professional services and tourists because of its beauty, spectacular waterfront, excellent transportation links, arts and culture events and facilities, culinary attractions, diverse shopping, and lifestyle opportunities. These all exist within a positive and strong economic environment.

The Vision embraces six guiding principles.

1. **Encourage living Downtown.** Increase residential development, making Downtown a place for seniors, singles and families, living throughout the Downtown within safe, healthy neighbourhoods where residents feel a strong sense of community.
2. **Improve and stabilize the Downtown economy** by generating new and expanded businesses. A stronger development climate and an ever-increasing population base will attract more business and investment to the Downtown, including new and revitalized shops, restaurants, and a variety of services.
3. **Integrate and coordinate arts, culture and entertainment facilities and programs.** Arts and culture are important to the quality of life in Nanaimo and are particularly appropriate located Downtown where they are readily accessible to everyone, contribute to the attractiveness and livability of Downtown and contribute to its economic stability. “A Cultural Strategy for Nanaimo”, adopted by City Council, June 2001, sets out a number of goals and coordinated actions for the city as a whole.
4. **Provide better linkages within Downtown and the Waterfront** emphasizing orientation to the waterfront with enhanced accessibility and pedestrian and cyclist pathways.
5. **Conserve and enhance the scale and historic character of Commercial Street** reinforcing and extending the old Downtown Core centered on Commercial Street into adjacent areas as Downtown uses expand.
6. **Provide convenient public transportation** by improving and increasing transit use between Downtown and other parts of the Island and the Lower Mainland and making it a more convenient and practical means to and from Downtown.

3.2 The New Concept Plan

The new Downtown Concept Plan describes a Downtown that integrates the aspirations of the many stakeholders and public who have contributed their ideas over the last several years. This is an interpretation of the Vision for Downtown.

Downtown is the heart of the city and its region. It is also the place where the history of Nanaimo began. The Bastion at the waterfront symbolizes the beginnings of the city and also provides the centre-piece and focal point of the Concept Plan.



It recognizes the special existing features of the area and enhances them to create a place of diversity and interest. Diversity and interest are provided in the shape, height and density of development, the distribution of varying land uses and activities, special landscaping treatments, and by emphasizing the special characteristics of different areas. These are linked together through a comprehensive pedestrian and road network.

The Plan is described in map form and its intentions are summarized under the following seven directions.

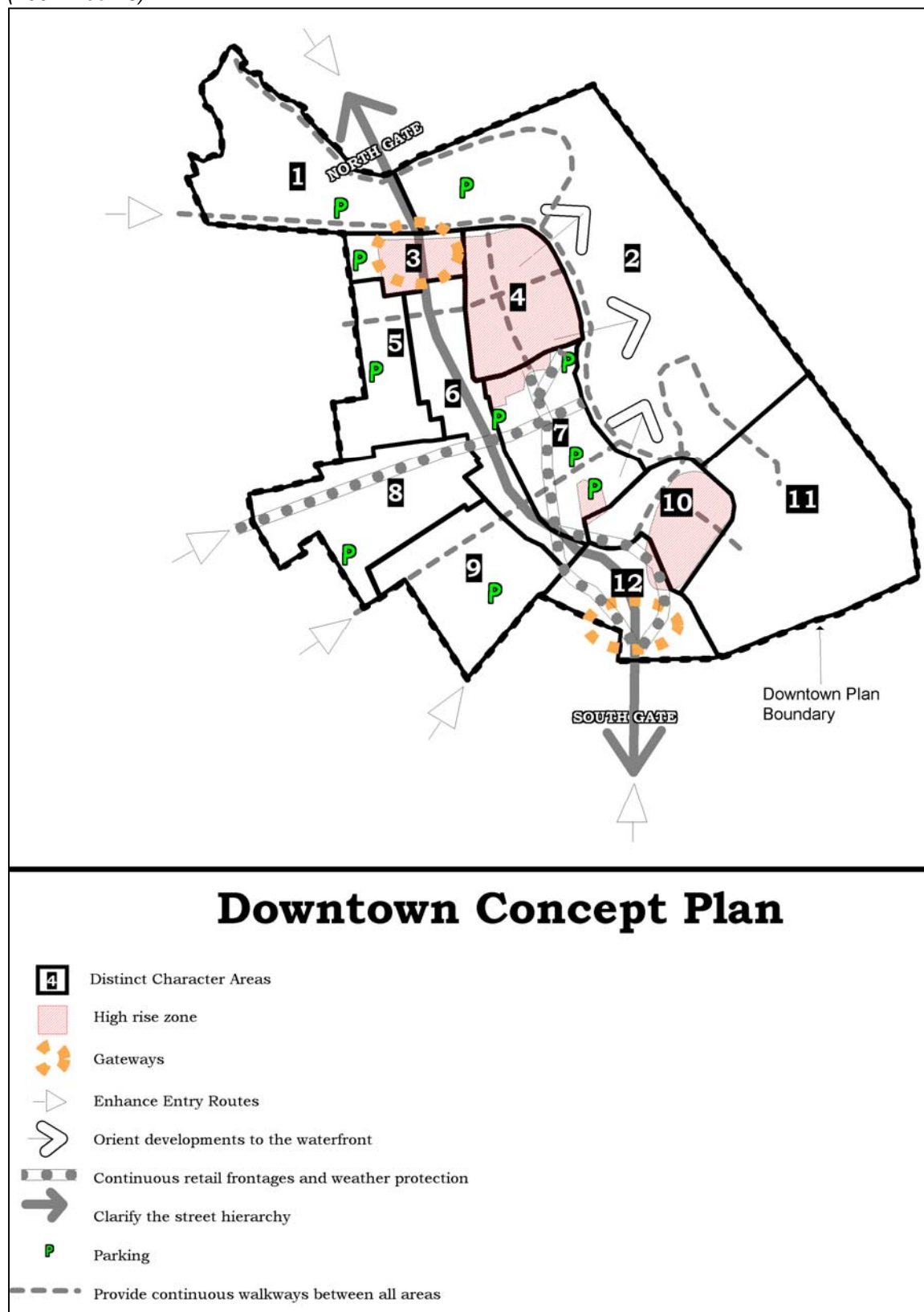
1. **Encourage living Downtown.** Provide for the intensification of housing development in many forms throughout Downtown. This will include locations for infill, townhouses, live/work accommodations and medium and high density apartments, including locations for high-rise towers. It also includes creating livable environments for those various residential communities. They will vary from quiet enclaves to infill housing above stores in the heart of the commercial and entertainment core. They will vary from student housing and singles to housing for families, and seniors. Housing should be inclusive of all income levels and strive to meet the special needs of those populations identified in the Housing Study, "Building Capacity: A Housing Needs Assessment (1999)".
2. **Improve the Physical Environment.** Set guidelines for the creation of a high quality physical environment that includes a diversity of uses, a network of parks and open spaces, special gateways to provide notable entrances to the Downtown, distinctive character areas, comfortable and attractive streets, emphasis on the enjoyment and convenience of walking and programs of public art, festivals and community events.

3. **Strengthen Downtown Business Opportunities.** Provide for a great diversity of uses in the commercial areas, continuous retail frontages with weather protection, increase the resident population base, improve accessibility and parking and program year round events focused on the commercial core and waterfront areas. Promote our connectiveness through existing fibre optics and excellent transportation linkages to Vancouver and beyond.
4. **Enhance the Enjoyment of the Waterfront and the Natural Environment.** Orient new developments to the waterfront and the expansive views of the surrounding ocean and mountains. Preserve existing and create new public views of the ocean and mountains. Improve access to the waterfront and increase and improve pedestrian links between the waterfront walkway and the rest of Downtown especially the core commercial areas.
5. **Improve Accessibility.** Clarify the hierarchy of roads and accesses with street design and a comprehensive signage system. Emphasize pedestrian, bicycle, public transit and vehicular accessibility to Downtown.
6. **Identify Distinct Character Areas.** Adopt new zoning regulations and design guidelines that direct public and private developments to emphasize the distinctive features of different areas of Downtown.
7. **Create Attractive Linkages Between all Areas.** Develop public and private improvement programs to extend and expand walk and bike ways around the Downtown, creating greenways wherever possible. Provide a comprehensive signage program to provide information, orientation and direction. Give entrance routes to Downtown special design treatments, and encourage significant developments at entrances to Downtown to provide recognizable Gateways.

The Concept will take many years to come to fruition and will take a great deal of energy by many people to realize the vision. It will require a variety of actions, from negotiating and marketing, to designing and building, and through monitoring and updating the policies that are driving it.

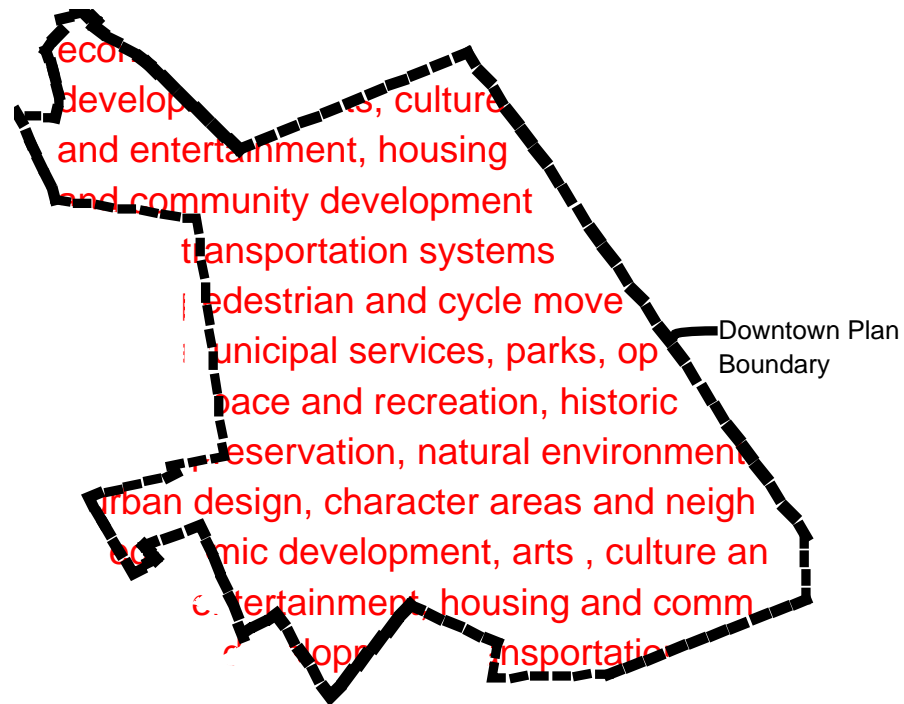
3.2 The New Concept Plan

(2004-Dec-13)





POLICIES & ACTIONS



This chapter is the core of the Downtown Plan. It contains the objectives, policies and actions that will guide the future development of the Downtown over the next five to ten years. It addresses nine areas of primary focus:

1. Economic Development
2. Arts, Culture and Entertainment
3. Housing and Community Development
4. Transportation Systems (including pedestrian and cycle movement)
5. Parks, Open Space and Recreation
6. Historic Preservation
7. Natural Environment
8. Urban Design
9. Character Areas (Neighbourhoods)

4.1 Economic Development

This is a long-term plan. Its fulfillment depends on the ability of Nanaimo to attract the type of development that will generate those changes described in the Downtown Plan. Similarly, the phasing will depend on which of the many initiatives proposed will occur first. These could include a major renewal of the Harbourpark project, the commencement of residential development in the Chapel Front area, the redevelopment of the Front Street waterfront properties following the initiative of the new convention centre, or the initiation of the improvement of Terminal Avenue.

The presence of all levels of government in the Downtown is critically important to the Downtown economy. The Downtown has become a centre for the delivery of many community services provided by the private sector, non-profit and senior governments. They play a vital role Downtown both economically and through their provision of critical community services.

It is equally important to seek cooperation and partnerships in development among stakeholders, owners and the private and public economic sectors.



Objective

To build on and realize the strengths of the Downtown as the economic heart of Nanaimo; a centre for the arts, culture, tourism, specialty retail, education, knowledge-based and technology industries, and a prosperous business, professional, government and community services centre, complemented by a strong residential community.

To capitalize on Downtown's proximity to excellent transportation connections and well-developed communications infrastructure and accessibility to recreational amenities.

Policies and Actions

An Economic Vision for Downtown

Policy 1 Embrace the vision of a strong, progressive and busy Downtown and forge a commitment to foster its growth.

Action 1 Encourage investment and attract people, actively promote the Downtown as the natural business centre for the city and the broader regional economy.

Action 2 Facilitate networking and strategic partnerships among members of the Downtown economic community.

Strong Downtown Economy

Policy 2 Support major public and private investment in the Downtown to stabilize, increase and diversify the Downtown economic base.

Action 1 Clarify the roles of the key stakeholders, eliminating any unnecessary overlap or duplication of activities.

Action 2 Develop and implement a Downtown Business Plan with a set of integrated strategies to attract new economic activities and to keep existing activities in the Downtown.

Action 3 Consider the creation of a Downtown Development Corporation to facilitate the development and implementation of this business plan.

Action 4 Implement a program to recruit new businesses based on the market research undertaken for Downtown.

Action 5 Through on-going dialogue with existing Downtown business associations, identify policies and actions that will encourage existing businesses and community services to remain in the core area.

Action 6 Continue to explore opportunities for incentives to assist with pilot projects and time limited revitalization initiatives.

Action 7 Develop a market identification that advertises the Downtown as the heart of the community and promotes the Downtown as a place to live, visit and conduct business.

Action 8 Review municipal policies and regulations to remove unintentional policy barriers that may discourage investment.

Quality Development

Policy 3 Ensure quality development in Downtown.

Action 1 Adopt land use regulations, guidelines and administrative processes that support quality development in the Downtown, encouraging flexibility and design innovation.

Concentration of Government Offices

Policy 4 Encourage municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments and government funded agencies to maintain a strong presence in the Downtown.

Action 1 Actively market the Downtown to both levels of government regarding the benefits of retaining offices and relocating other offices to Downtown.

Centre of Academic Excellence

Policy 5 Encourage the growth of educational institutions and other training facilities in the Downtown.

Action 1 Encourage a university presence in the form of a campus and other facilities as the core of a Downtown educational emphasis.

Action 2 Work with Malaspina University College (MUC) to identify public/private partnerships focusing on the development of Downtown educational facilities.

Action 3 Encourage the development of supportive services, programs and facilities for Downtown residents, staff and students.

Action 4 Coordinate with the convention centre and Downtown hotels, to promote regionally based educational opportunities.

Tourism Infrastructure

Policy 6 Strengthen the Downtown's role in Nanaimo's tourism industry.

Action 1 In conjunction with Tourism Nanaimo prepare and implement a Downtown Tourism Plan to improve and promote Downtown attractions that would better serve Nanaimo area residents, tourists and business travelers. This would provide policies and actions for

such initiatives as enhanced harbour-based tourism, passenger ferry facilities and services, cultural, heritage and recreational facilities and programs.

Policy 7 Encourage cruise ship visits to Downtown Nanaimo.

4.2 Arts, Culture and Entertainment

The Downtown Plan recognizes the significant and far-reaching social and economic benefits of a strong arts, culture and entertainment industry, the value of artistic and cultural expression and enjoyment, and the value of this sector to strengthen Nanaimo's tourism potential and economic growth. The Bastion, library, museum, new theatre and arts centre provide an important beginning for what could become an extensive and important presence of the arts and culture in Downtown. Multi-use of adapted heritage buildings and new facilities with a variety of programmed activities can provide Downtown with a special attractiveness not available in other parts of the region and thus becoming another special reason to visit Downtown.

Arts, Culture and Entertainment objectives, policies and actions for the Downtown are designed to integrate with the "Nanaimo Cultural Strategy, July 2001", in order to achieve the goals of the strategy for Downtown. The Nanaimo Cultural Strategy was developed by the Nanaimo Cultural Strategy Sub-Committee and sets out the Vision, Municipal Cultural Policy, Goals and Strategies for identified key areas of cultural development in Nanaimo.

The cultural strategy includes the following components:

- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Art in Public Places
- ☐ Facilities
- ☐ Marketing and Economic Development
- ☐ Programming/Education

Objective

To enrich and enliven the spirit and quality of the Downtown experience by intensifying it as the centre for arts and culture, and to expand the Downtown role as a regional, national and international centre for the development and enjoyment of the arts, culture, and other forms of entertainment.



Policies and Actions

Intensify Downtown Arts and Culture

Policy 1 Continue to build on the important presence of arts and culture in Downtown.

Action 1 Intensify the use of existing arts and culture facilities, and encourage the development of complementary activities.

Action 2 Explore opportunities to utilize existing heritage and other buildings for arts and culture facilities while ensuring that the location of such facilities is appropriate to the nature of the proposed Downtown Character areas.

Action 3 Develop programs to encourage artists, arts and cultural groups, and related professionals to find working and living space in the Downtown.

Downtown Public Art

Policy 2 Encourage public art in the Downtown.

Action 1 Work with the Cultural Committee to promote the “Art in Public Places Policy” in Nanaimo with the objective of commissioning and/or purchasing public art for display in public places in the Downtown.

Action 2 Encourage private developers to incorporate public art into their projects.

Marketing and Financial Support

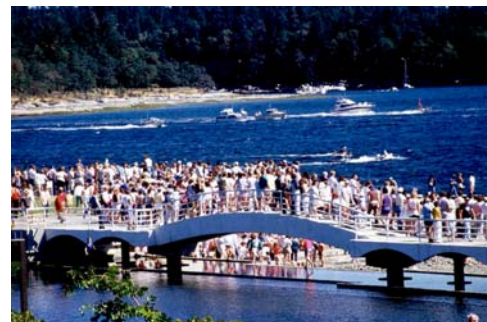
Policy 3 Strengthen the funding for marketing Downtown attractions and events.

Action 1 Continue private/public sector partnerships to promote year round festivals, arts, cultural and community events as part of the Downtown Nanaimo experience.

Action 2 Continue supporting established and emerging Downtown arts and cultural groups and programs through municipal grant programs.

Action 3 Continue to facilitate financial support from other levels of government, foundations and private donors.

Action 4 Provide strong support in-principle for Downtown (through letters of support).



4.3 Housing and Community Development

For many years, City Council has endorsed Downtown housing as a means to build a strong, stable population base in the city centre. Despite these supportive policies, little housing has been built in the Downtown during the past several years.

While it is unlikely that more than one residential high-rise may occur every five years, there seems to be consensus among people that this form of housing with its higher densities would improve the economics of residential development which, in turn, would help over time to provide the number of residents needed to add 24-hour vitality to Downtown. While economic reality will limit the number of high-rises built, the proposed high-rise zones in the Downtown Plan will enable high-rise building forms to be considered as a housing option. These areas are specially located to preserve important public views. Other housing types including converted heritage buildings, medium-rise apartments and townhouses, live/work studios are all appropriate to the Downtown. They help to provide the variety and choice to meet diverse socio-economic needs.

New initiatives and incentives are needed to attract developers and the citizens of Nanaimo to reconsider Downtown as an attractive place to live. The Downtown Plan's housing strategy proposes a number of policies to address this area.

Objective

To substantially increase the Downtown's residential population and provide a variety of housing, through well-placed high-rise, medium density and townhouse development, to serve a broad range of social and economic needs. Develop a sense of community amongst all Downtown residents.

Policies and Actions

Downtown Housing Targets

Policy 1 Increase the resident population in the Downtown.

Action 1 Stimulate Downtown housing development by expanding areas zoned for residential development and encouraging high density and high-rise residential in specified areas.

Action 2 Continue to encourage the conversion of Downtown heritage buildings to residential use through the financial incentives available through the City's Downtown Heritage Residential Conversion Program.

Action 3 Examine ways to provide more flexibility in the application of Provincial and Municipal Building Code regulations in order to safely convert older buildings in the Downtown to residential use and live/work accommodation.

Action 4 Implement a Downtown housing marketing program involving both private and public sector partners in the utilization of their property and the promotion of Downtown living.

Action 5 Maintain a listing of housing available in the Downtown for the information of potential residents and for use in the marketing program.

Action 6 Improve the residential environment through public improvements to streets, parks and open spaces and convenient connections to local commercial, neighbourhood facilities and support services.

Action 7 Discuss Local Area Improvement cost sharing formulas and methods for implementation where there is a Downtown community benefit and no adjacent property owners.

Downtown Residents

Policy 2 Encourage a wide variety of residential development in the Downtown affordable for people at all income levels.

Action 1 Encourage a wide range of housing choice in terms of type, tenure, affordability and design in all areas of the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Action 2 Develop an action plan to address the housing needs of low income and special needs households in the Downtown.

Action 3 Consider the use of incentives to ensure opportunities for the development of affordable and special needs housing, as listed below, are realized:

- ☐ purpose-built market rental housing;
- ☐ seniors housing including assisted living options;
- ☐ artists live/work studios;
- ☐ non-profit rent geared to income housing suitable for students and low income singles.

Community Development in the Downtown

Policy 3 Encourage community development in the Downtown.

Action 1 Establish a community development program in the Downtown that facilitates interaction amongst the residents and works to identify and address the need for services and facilities.

Action 2 Support Downtown residents in establishing a representative neighbourhood association.

Action 3 Determine, in consultation with Downtown stakeholders, the need for new community amenity space.

Policy 4 Ensure safety and security in Downtown residential areas.

Action 1 Support development of a crime prevention program in concert with the RCMP, the business community and residents.

Action 2 Maintain a Community Police Station in the Downtown and operate crime prevention programs such as Neighbourhood Foot Patrols, Neighbourhood/Apartment Watch, the Security Network Program and the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Action 3 Ensure that all designs for residential buildings are reviewed using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED).

4.4 Transportation Systems

The central theme in the future development of the transportation system is to reduce the reliance on the private automobile and maximize the attractiveness of pedestrian, cycle and public transit alternatives. This still means that Downtown has to be conveniently accessible to commercial servicing vehicles and have good access and parking areas for the private automobile. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the road network has the capacity to serve Downtown Nanaimo as a regional centre for people, goods and services.

The potential for business and tourism growth through linkages by ferries, float planes and cruise ships is also vital to the future of Downtown.

Objective

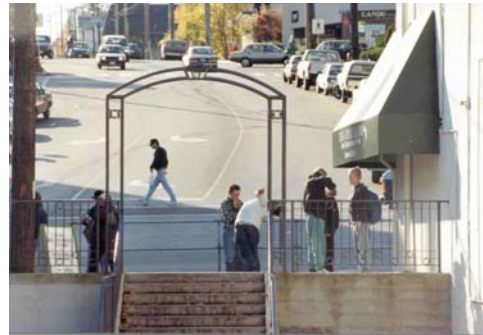
To provide a safe, balanced, efficient and integrated transportation system in the Downtown that serves the needs of existing and future development and accommodates each mode of transportation – pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, ferry, air and rail services, and commercial and private vehicles.

Policies and Actions

Policy 1 Provide a safe, efficient and pleasant environment for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and commercial and private vehicle drivers.

Action 1 Develop a Downtown Transportation Plan that identifies improvements to the present system to implement this policy as more specifically described in the remainder of this section of the Plan.

4.4.1 Pedestrian Emphasis



Emphasis is on making the Downtown attractive to the pedestrian. This means making it comfortable and convenient to walk from place to place Downtown.

Policies and Actions

A Quality Pedestrian Environment

Policy 1 Create an attractive, high quality pedestrian environment.

Action 1 Provide amenities for pedestrians throughout the Downtown, by implementing streetscape plans and design guidelines for special pedestrian routes and by encouraging active use of sidewalk space.

Action 2 Establish a policy and procedures whereby improvements to the pedestrian environment are incorporated as a significant component in funding and implementing roadway improvements in the Downtown.

Action 3 Encourage continuous weather protection on main pedestrian routes, especially on shopping streets.

Action 4 Improve and expand the pedestrian circulation network to link important destinations within the Downtown as part of significant redevelopment projects.

Action 5 Strengthen connections between the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods by identifying missing links in the circulation network.

Action 6 Establish a pedestrian signage/ mapping system for Downtown streets, sidewalks and open spaces to direct and orient pedestrians and to promote Downtown attractions.

Transportation Management Measures

Policy 2 Improve traffic and pedestrian movements in the Downtown by implementing transportation management measures that address the specific needs of each particular neighbourhood, as required.

Action 1 Review the operation of the transportation management system.

Action 2 Consider the importance of pedestrian mobility in the Downtown.

Safety, Maintenance and Accessibility

Policy 3 Ensure that pedestrian routes and pedways are safe, secure, comfortable, well maintained and accessible to all persons.

Action 1 Explore options for improving intersection design and traffic calming and permitting mid-block crossings in selected locations to give more priority to pedestrians.

4.4.2 Bicycle Routes



Emphasis is on encouraging cycling by providing safe, attractive and convenient bike routes connecting to and throughout Downtown.

Policies and Actions

A Bicycle Friendly Downtown

Policy 1 Ensure the bike route system is continuous and well connected to major destination points within the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Action 1 Continue to develop integrated on-road and off-road cycle routes to and within Downtown.

Action 2 Provide and encourage development of end-of-trip facilities such as, change rooms, showers, storage lockers and safe and secure bicycle parking.

4.4.3 Public Transit



Emphasis is on increasing public transit use by making it a more convenient and practical means to travel to and within the Downtown.

Policies and Actions

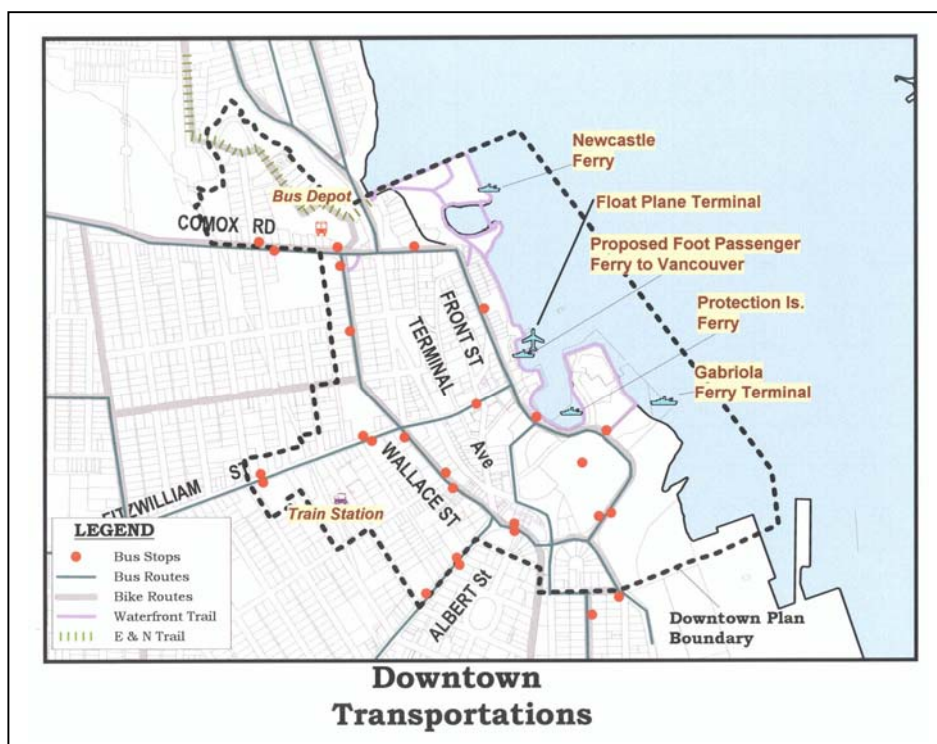
Transit First

Policy 1 Adopt policies wherein an emphasis is placed on establishing public transit as a practical alternate means of access to the Downtown.

Action 1 Develop an easy-to-use Downtown transit route network that integrates with other transportation modes.

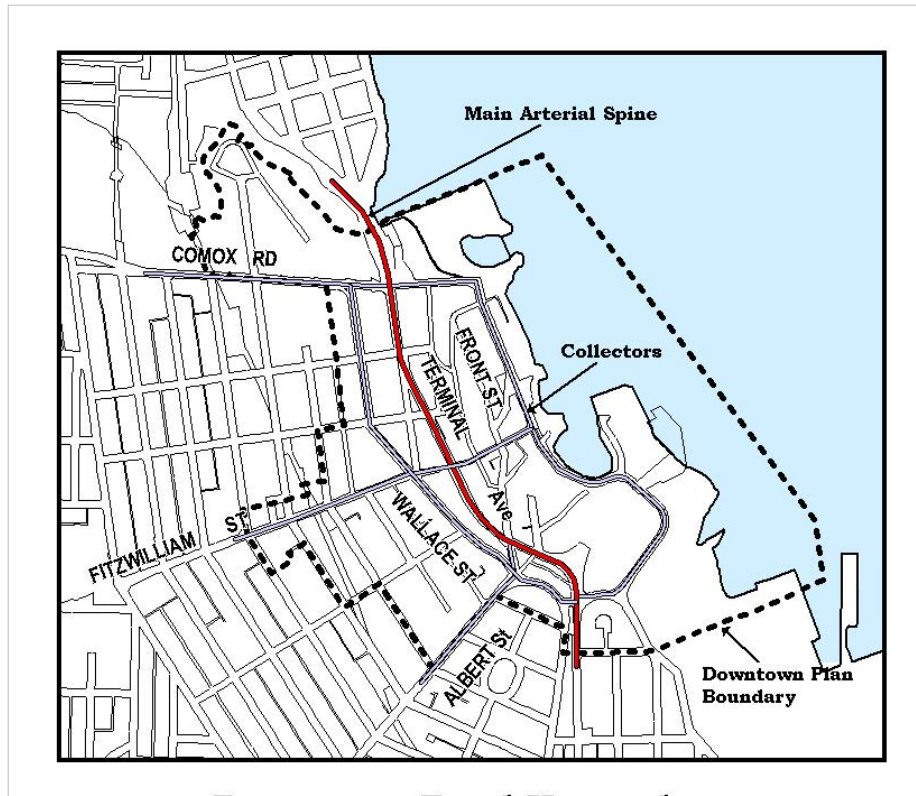
Action 2 Improve bus stops with better shelters and route information displays.

Action 3 Develop options for and implement a shuttle bus or vintage streetcar that could accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles and connects tourist and other attractions in the Downtown, and central area neighbourhoods to high traffic destinations.



4.4.4 Road Network

Emphasis is on encouraging the safe and efficient movement of vehicular traffic to, from and within Downtown, while providing a safe, efficient and pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



Policies and Actions

Road System

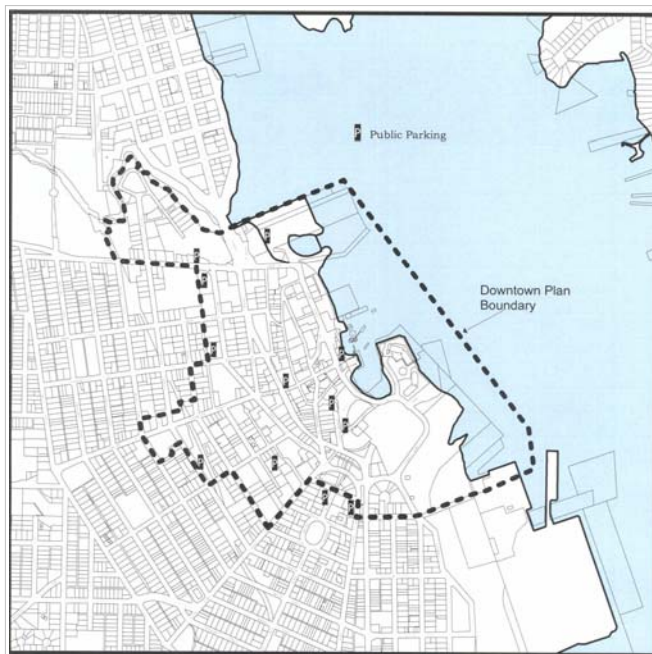
Policy 1 Continue to monitor the road system and take any step necessary to ensure that it is easy to understand and provides convenient access to a variety of Downtown destinations and for a variety of purposes.

Action 1 Review the hierarchy of roads to ensure that Downtown oriented traffic needs are met.

Action 2 Provide a comprehensive signage system to clarify the road system and access to and within Downtown.

Action 3 Enhance the following major entry routes to Downtown: Fitzwilliam Street, Nicol Street, Terminal Avenue, Comox Road and Albert Street.

4.4.5 Parking



Emphasis is on providing a sufficient supply of convenient parking and to implement programs and processes to make parking more attractive and easier for the customers of the Downtown shops, offices, restaurants, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities.

Policies and Actions

Downtown Parking

Policy 1 Ensure coordinated management of Downtown parking.

Action 1 Provide efficient and effective management of Downtown parking through coordinated customer oriented information, pricing and advertising programs.

Action 2 Include parking signage in an overall signage study for Downtown.

Diversified Proactive Approach to Short-Term Parking

Policy 2 Recognize that the perceived lack of convenient, visible on-street parking for shoppers and a generally poor public perception of parking is a serious issue affecting the Downtown economy and adopt a diversified, proactive approach to counteract this problem.

Action 1 Parking Committee to review parking policies for Downtown and recommend changes including whether or not a new bylaw is required.

Employee Parking

Policy 3 Place a higher priority on customer parking over employee parking.

Action 1 Work towards reducing on-site parking needs through the promotion of other practical and efficient travel modes.

Residential Parking Requirements

Policy 4 Maintain present residential parking requirements.

Action 1 Maintain reduced parking requirements for residential development in the Downtown to help foster redevelopment.

4.4.6 Truck Routes

Emphasis is on promoting efficient truck movements.

Policies and Actions

Truck Route Network and Signage

Policy 1 Ensure efficient design and operation of truck route network for the movement of goods in the Downtown.

Action 1 Assess adequacy of the truck route network and its operations to ensure efficiency of urban goods movement and to reduce impacts on traffic flow in the Downtown.

Action 2 Provide clear truck route information and signage to ensure the effective movement of goods in the Downtown.

4.4.7 Ferry, Air and Rail Service

Emphasis is to encourage improved accessibility to Downtown by these services. Because of its waterfront location, Downtown can anticipate that as it grows and its attractiveness is enhanced for business, entertainment and living, that there will be increased demand for a variety of existing and new services linking Downtown with other destinations.

Policies and Actions

By Air

Policy 1 Encourage the development of air services to the Downtown waterfront.

By Water

Policy 2 Encourage the development of a passenger ferry connection to Downtown Vancouver.

By Rail

Policy 3 Encourage ongoing and improved rail service to provide commuter and tourism access to Downtown.

4.5 Parks, Open Space and Recreation



As Downtown intensifies it is important to ensure that the city's parks, open space and recreational facilities meet the needs of its growing working and resident population as well as support local tourism. Parks, open spaces and special features like Nanaimo's Trail System play an important role in strengthening the appeal of the Downtown. Extensions of the trail system into more urban walkways and cycle ways add to the attractiveness of Downtown and provide convenient linkages between all of its parts.

With its proximity to the Harbour and the waterfront parks and public open spaces, the Downtown provides exceptional recreational amenities.

Opportunities occur throughout Downtown, especially as redevelopment takes place, to provide a variety of smaller public and private open spaces and some larger urban squares for gatherings, festivals, markets, outdoor cafes, and sitting and strolling in the sun.

Trees are an important element of the urban landscape and every opportunity should be taken to soften and freshen the urban environment with street trees and a variety of flowers and shrubs.

Objectives

To ensure that the Downtown offers high quality parks, open spaces and recreational facilities to serve both the active and passive recreational needs of residents, workers and visitors, throughout the year.

Policies and Actions

Provision of Parks and Open Space

Policy 1 Ensure an adequate supply of readily accessible parks and open space to meet the varied needs of a growing population Downtown.

Action 1 Determine the open space needs for a new and growing population and a mechanism for acquiring lands needed for parks and urban open spaces in those areas of the Downtown where park space needs have been identified, particularly in the neighbourhoods targeted for more residential development.

Action 2 Encourage the creation of interest and surprise throughout the Downtown using available corners, alleys, rooftops and nooks for innovative open spaces.

4.6 Historic Preservation

Active Use of Open Spaces

Policy 2 Encourage active uses in open spaces appropriate to the nature of the proposed Downtown Character areas.

Action 1 Develop public open space to accommodate uses such as open air markets, street vendors, sidewalk cafes, artwork and exhibits.

Park Safety

Policy 3 Ensure park safety and security for residents and visitors.

Action 1 Ensure plans for new parks and for the redevelopment of existing parks follow design guidelines for crime prevention.



The Downtown has a rich history. This can be seen particularly well in its unusual street layout and in many older buildings of architectural and cultural interest. As well, the changes that have been made to the natural topography by successive generations, whether it is the filling of the ocean inlet to create Terminal Avenue, the numerous mining shafts below, or the several remaining rock outcroppings, remain to be conserved in one way or another so that the Downtown of the future has memories of the past.

Objective

To protect and manage the historic resources in the Downtown area so as to enhance the quality of the urban environment for the cultural and economic benefit of existing and future residents of the City of Nanaimo.

Policies and Actions

Encourage Preservation

Policy 1 Encourage the preservation of those buildings, areas and structures, including monuments, bridges, built landscapes and artifacts, that are of historical or architectural merit and ensure that these resources are protected and enhanced.

Action 1 Develop programs providing financial and administrative support to promote the rehabilitation and re-use of historic resources.

Promote the Benefits of Historic Preservation

Policy 2 Increase public awareness of Downtown's historic resources.

Action 1 Provide information and advice to owners, developers, interest groups, individuals and the media to foster a sense of ownership and pride in Downtown buildings and history.

Action 2 Maintain a communication program to promote the benefits of historic preservation.

Heritage Organizations

Policy 3 Support the efforts of community organizations and historic preservation groups.

Action 1 Involve the local community in historic preservation activities.

Action 2 Provide advice and assistance to undertake rehabilitation initiatives.

Rehabilitation and Re-use of Historic Properties

Policy 4 Maintain a flexible approach in implementing policies to encourage the preservation and use of historic resources in the Downtown.

Action 1 Promote the re-use of historic properties by providing advice, incentives, exemptions and compensation to owners.

Action 2 Encourage civic departments, as well as governments and government-funded agencies and socio-cultural groups to locate their offices and activities in heritage buildings.

The Architectural Integrity of Buildings

Policy 5 Ensure the visual and aesthetic qualities of historic buildings, sites and structures are preserved and rehabilitated.

Action 1 Provide design guidelines and flexible regulations appropriate to the historic character of the buildings and the area.

Action 2 Ensure that infill developments, renovations and additions to existing buildings respect the historical nature of adjacent and/or neighbouring properties.



PORTION OF COMMERCIAL STREET, NANAIMO, B.C.

4.7 Natural Environment

The quality of the air, water and land in Downtown has been and continues to be heavily affected by the actions of humans. Air pollution, stormwater run off, waste production, energy use, and methods of transportation all contribute to reducing the health of the natural environment.

Progress is being made in the general awareness of the problem and new methods of building to reduce energy consumption and waste, and rejuvenating natural systems of watercourses and vegetation, are being used. Reducing the reliance on the automobile through development of compact communities with the resultant increased usage of bikes and walking not only reduce pollution, but add to community enjoyment in urban living.

Objective

To enhance the quality of the natural environment by taking steps to reduce pollution, reduce energy consumption and minimize waste production, protect the remaining natural features, increase the stock of urban vegetation and provide opportunities to experience nature in the Downtown area.

Policies and Actions

A Greener Downtown

Policy 1 Improve the ecological health of the Downtown area.

Action 1 Maintain and expand the quality and quantity of natural vegetation and trees in both the public and private domain to improve the ecological health of the Downtown area.

Stormwater Management

Policy 2 Encourage on-site stormwater management strategies to support on-site infiltration and reduce demand on stormwater infrastructure.

Action 1 Continue to employ best stormwater management practices to provide information and advice to landowners and developers.

Action 2 Initiate further study for additional approaches for dealing with stormwater.



4.8 Urban Design

Downtown is the core of the region and the focus of the community. It exhibits the historic beginnings of the city in its street configuration and its numerous distinctive historic buildings and places. As well, the present shape of urban development has occurred in response to the unique topographical features which it occupies. These features provide Nanaimo with its uniqueness, its sense of time and its basic attractiveness. Sound urban design policies will ensure that as development continues these features are respected and enhanced while new urban forms provide for the future livability of the people who live, work and visit Downtown. New developments should also have regard for view preservation, the penetration of natural lighting to public and private spaces, weather protection, privacy and safety, public art, attractive landscaped public places, comfortable and convenient accessibility, as well as creating an overall attractive image for Downtown in the future.

Memorable cities around the world are frequently characterized by their setting. Nanaimo has a number of unique characteristics which, if given expression through urban design direction for new development, can provide Nanaimo with a recognizable and memorable sense of place.

The unique characteristics consist of these elements:

- ❑ The waterfront setting with outstanding easterly views.
- ❑ A natural amphitheatre – an amphitheatre formed by the Old City Area and a succession of layers reaching from the Old City Area to the top of Mount Benson.
- ❑ The topography of the raised centre of Downtown contrasting with the valley formed by Terminal Avenue and the rest of the vestiges of the historic ocean inlet.
- ❑ The various sized giant outcrops of rock occurring randomly around the Downtown area, some of which are already partially exploited to public advantage, such as the museum.
- ❑ The unusual street pattern formed by the fan shaped roads of the Old City and the curving narrow roads in the centre of Downtown.

Objective

To strive for excellence in the built environment of Downtown, enhancing its unique topographical and historic features and ensuring an attractive, comfortable and convenient place for those who live and work there and to attract tourists, shoppers and those seeking recreation and entertainment.

Policies and Actions

An Attractive and Livable Downtown

Policy 1 Enhance the Downtown by creating a clean, healthy, livable environment that offers visual and cultural richness.

Action 1 Prepare a specific urban design strategy for Downtown to provide guidance for all physical change in Downtown.

Action 2 Adopt urban design guidelines to give direction to Downtown development proposals.

Action 3 Provide guidelines for the design and integration of new developments, in order to ensure these developments improve the quality of the physical environment in the Downtown.

Action 4 Ensure that new developments incorporate human scale design principles in the first two storeys of development and that they relate to the street and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Action 5 Ensure that where a building fronts onto the street, it is designed to minimize blank walls or other flat surfaces that lack windows or sculptural relief.

Action 6 Ensure that wherever possible, the design of a building complements the materials, scale, texture, proportions, patterns, colours, window rhythms and alcove creation to expand sidewalk activity and details of its neighbouring structures to create a coordinated streetscape.

Action 7 Ensure that the design of any new development does not create adverse wind conditions on its periphery or in the vicinity of nearby buildings or open spaces at street level.

Action 8 Ensure that new developments allow sun penetration to streets and open spaces.

Action 9 Encourage the provision of continuous weather protection, particularly in the commercial core, through the use of canopies and awnings along selected streets.

Action 10 Ensure that the siting of new developments maintains and enhances existing views, vistas and visual corridors, and where possible, creates new ones.

Action 11 Locate artwork in prominent public spaces and encourage the inclusion of artworks and/or performing arts programs in public and private developments.

Action 12 Provide a system of distinctive, clear and well designed public signs in the Downtown that contributes to the overall enjoyment of the pedestrian environment.

The Distinctive Areas of Downtown

Policy 2 Retain, clarify and emphasize the distinctive characteristics of the different areas within Downtown.

Action 1 Prepare specific land use, density and form and character regulations and guidelines to accommodate the policies set out in section 4.9 on Character Areas.

Action 2 Identify and retain the special topographical features of Downtown Nanaimo and develop urban design guidelines that ensure new development will add emphasis and expression to those features.

Action 3 Encourage the development of special buildings to distinguish the main entrances to Downtown and its distinct neighbourhoods.

Create a Streetscape Environment

Policy 3 Create a unique sense of place and experiences for all to enjoy within the public realm.

Action 1 Develop a program of streetscape improvements for the main approach routes to Downtown.

Action 2 Strengthen the special identity of each Downtown character area through distinctive designs of streetscape elements such as lighting, street furniture and landscaping.

Action 3 Develop streetscape and urban design concepts and implementation strategies for special streets to ensure that they are distinctive and that they help define a sense of place in each of the Downtown neighbourhoods.

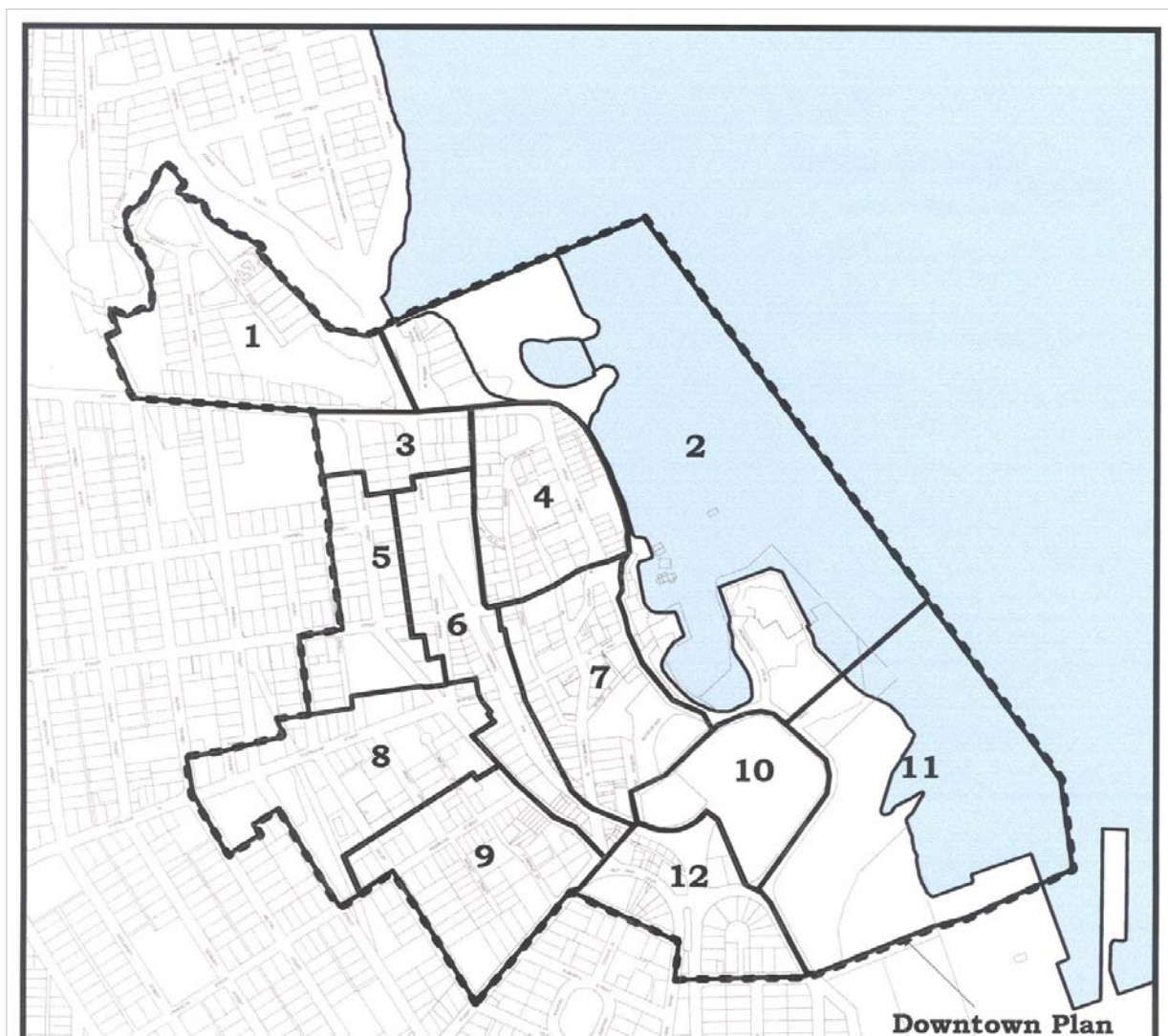
Action 4 Provide for high quality amenities and the visual interest of the pedestrian - amenities such as trees, landscaping, green spaces, benches, public art, pedestrian signage, warm-up places, public toilets, water fountains and banners.

Action 5 Prepare a Downtown Lighting Program oriented to the different needs of vehicular, cycle and pedestrian movement and to different character areas and building needs. This would include special lighting of landmark or Gateway buildings streets, open spaces, parking garages and Downtown bridges.

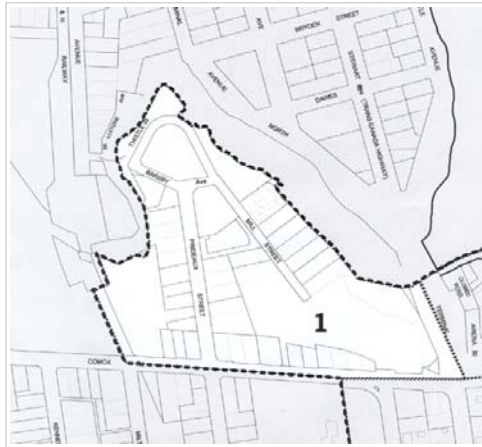
Action 6 Encourage activities like sidewalk cafes, open air markets, street vendors and year round programmed events on sidewalks and open spaces in commercial areas.

4.9 Character Areas

The urban design policies and actions set out in Section 4.9 apply to all areas of Downtown. However, Downtown is characterized by a variety of geographic areas and spatial and functional experiences. Some of them, like the commercial core, are readily identifiable and generally pleasant places. Others, like Terminal Avenue, while presently having a less pleasant environment, have the potential through future development of becoming especially attractive places with their own identifiable characteristics. This section describes the way to draw out and strengthen the special characteristics of these different areas. In so doing, future development will create a variety of distinct neighbourhoods thereby further enriching the Downtown experience. Desired actions are identified for each area.



4.9.1 Future Study Area 1



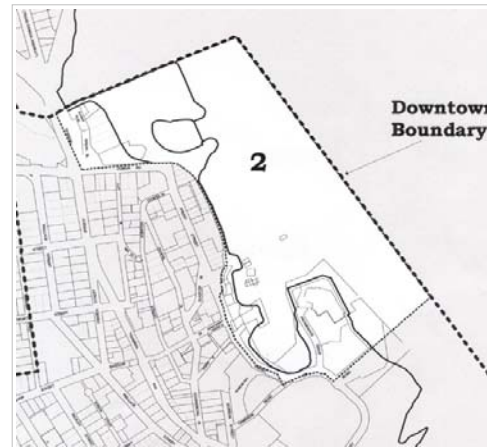
Tucked in the north west corner of the Downtown, this area is in transition. It is separated from the rest of town by the river bordering its northern boundary and is well linked to Downtown through the green walkways along the river to the waterfront, and Comox Road. It also has a major future role situated at a major Gateway entry to Downtown. However, further study is needed before the land use, form and accessibility potential of the site are determined. Clearly the pedestrian linkage along the river, under the Island Highway and connecting to the central waterfront will be a major component of future urban development as will the requirement that the development enhances this important intersection at the entry to Downtown.

Action

Planning Study

Action 1 Undertake a study of the area to determine planning guidelines for its future development enhancing the pedestrian connection through the greenway system along the river and its Gateway location.

4.9.2 Waterfront



The central waterfront is one of the major physical assets of Nanaimo. Over the years responsible authorities have established it as a major public attraction based on a sequence of walkways and open spaces with commercial uses, all incorporated into a vital working port. The many activities and attractions of the area will be further enhanced with the development of the new convention facility on Front Street and extending over the waterfront walkway. The whole of Downtown relates strongly to the physical amenities of the waterfront and developments next to the area should fully exploit and respect that relationship. While the waterfront is a major public attraction, much can be done in the form of new and enhanced connections to other Downtown areas to encourage and facilitate the extension of that attractiveness to the core commercial areas.



Action

Waterfront Walkway

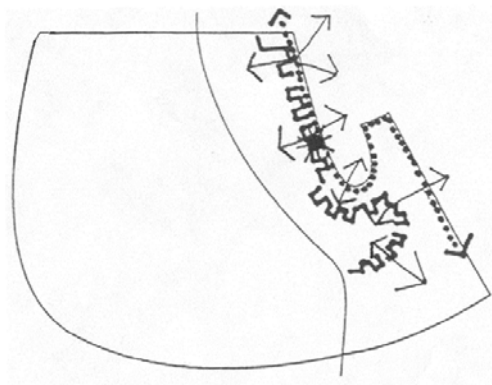
Action 1 Protect and enhance the waterfront walkway ensuring its continuity, convenience and attractiveness to the public.

Waterfront/Downtown Relationship

Action 2 Develop design guidelines which enhance and express a strong visual and functional relationship between Downtown and the Waterfront buildings and open spaces and the design details of those elements.

Linkages to Downtown

Action 3 Develop a strategy to create stronger more attractive and convenient pedestrian linkages between the waterfront and adjacent areas of Downtown giving priority to those routes by providing special treatment for pedestrian crossings on Front Street.



4.9.3 North Gate



Here is a special place in Nanaimo where the topographical features described in the urban design section provide Nanaimo with the opportunity through its zoning regulations to create a Gateway giving emphasis to this entry to Downtown. North Gate is the location for impressive buildings on either side of Terminal, at Comox, to form a Gateway to mark the entrance to Downtown.

Higher density in the form of highrises is supported in portions of the North Gate area, as identified in Section 5.1 "Land Use."

Guidelines for the development of highrises in the character area include the following:

Minimum Lot Area:

1300.6 square metres (14,000 square feet)

Setbacks:

7.5 metres (24.6 feet) for all yards

Separation Between Towers:

30.48 metres (100 feet)

Maximum Floor Plate:

594.56 square metres (6400 square feet)
for those floors six storeys or above, with a
maximum depth and width of 24.38 metres
(80 feet).

(2004-Dec-13)

Action

Gateway to Downtown

Action 1 Permit higher densities on these sites on condition that the sites are consolidated to allow comprehensive design to occur and high quality design of the buildings to express the Gateway theme.

4.9.4 Chapel Front



This area contains a number of significant heritage buildings including the Courthouse. It is also the location for the new convention centre, and the location of a variety of commercial, residential and entertainment uses. While these uses remain appropriate for this area, the concept envisages the development of a major high density mixed use neighbourhood with a significant addition of medium and high density housing. These will consist of townhouses, medium height apartments, and several high-rise towers. These new uses will develop around the existing street system but with significant consolidation of lots to provide sufficient area for comprehensive design. Continuous low scale street frontages with a variety of offices, stores, live/work studios and townhouses characterize this area. Several high-rise apartment towers are located outside of major public view corridors to enjoy the expansive panoramic views from a few storeys up. A comprehensive plan will site the high-rise component of the development amongst public and semi-public open space elements. Linkages to other parts of town are established along existing streets and through some mid

block mews, courtyard and greenways incorporated into new developments.

Higher density in the form of highrises is supported in portions of the Chapel Front area, as identified in Section 5.1 “Land Use.”

Guidelines for the development of highrises in the character area include the following:

Minimum Lot Area:

2787 square metres (30,000 square feet)

Setbacks:

4.6 metres (15 feet) for all yards

Separation Between Towers:

30.48 metres (100 feet)

Maximum Floor Plate:

594.56 square metres (6400 square feet)
for those floors six storeys or above, with a
maximum depth and width of 24.38 metres
(80 feet).

(2004-Dec-13)

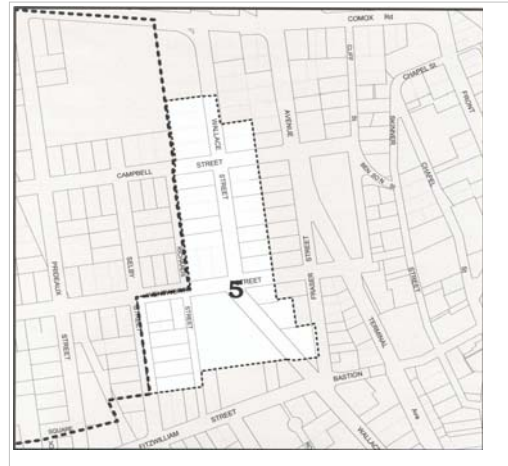


Action

A New High Density Residential Area

Action 1 Prepare new zoning and design guidelines to encourage the development of the Chapel Front area as a high density mixed use urban neighbourhood incorporating well located high-rise apartment towers.

4.9.5 Wallace



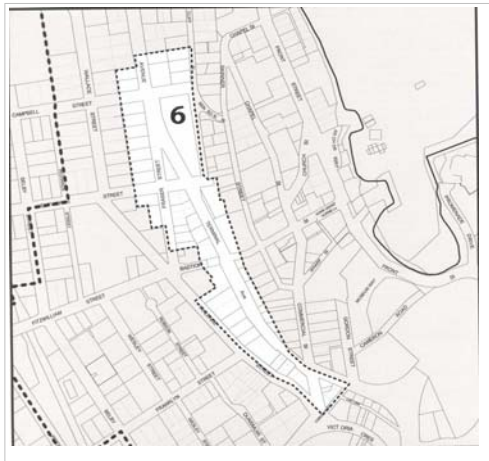
Wallace serves this part of Downtown as an important traffic collector and as such has excellent accessibility and exposure as well as being located on a proposed major pedestrian route between the Old City neighbourhoods and the Waterfront. Situated between a predominantly residential area and the future mixed use development of Terminal Avenue suggests that this area would best develop for a mixture of residential and office uses at a density compatible with three to four storey high, street wall related buildings. Minor retail uses are needed to service the surrounding office and residential uses. Design guidelines are needed to show how developments on the east side of Wallace Street could be developed comprehensively with properties fronting Terminal Avenue to take advantage of the sloping site.

Action

Develop and Integrate with Terminal Avenue Developments

Action 1 Prepare new zoning and design guidelines to accommodate a mix of low rise housing and office development along Wallace Street and encourage the integration of sites on the east side of Wallace Street with sites on Terminal Avenue to create terraced forms of development fronting Terminal Avenue.

4.9.6 Terminal Parkway

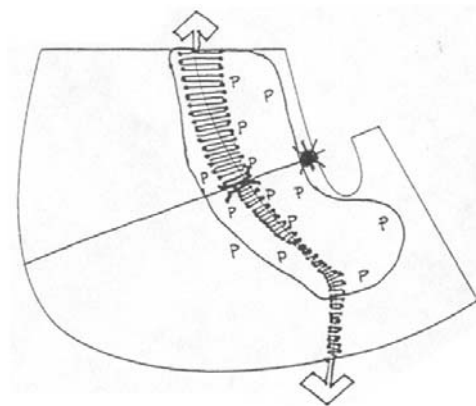


Terminal Avenue once functioned as the main north-south Vancouver Island Highway. Today it is still primarily a traffic artery lined with auto oriented uses. It is not an attractive environment despite its interesting ravine-like form. However, there is considerable potential to convert the area into an attractive place given strong direction to minimize the impact of traffic, greatly improve the physical and visual environment, and encourage new mixed use developments. This requires a bold step. A major tree planting program on public and private properties would go a long way to creating this new environment. New uses could then be encouraged along with sidewalk improvements for the benefit of pedestrians, as well as helping to manage traffic movements and access to individual properties. Integrated into the new design would be the walkways and bridges linking the Old City with Downtown. This requires the development of a design plan and an implementation strategy.

Action

Terminal as Greenway

Action 1 Prepare a design plan and implementation strategy to convert Terminal Avenue into an attractive urban greenway environment and encourage medium rise, terraced and mixed use developments along its edges.



4.9.7 Core



This is the historic commercial core of the Downtown. The street pattern, the continuous shop fronts and the low rise, street wall form of development creates the attractive human scale character of this area. New development should be encouraged which enhances this character through compatible infill of offices, live/work studios and housing. New development should respect the scale and character of the core and especially respect the architecture of the many heritage buildings. Infill developments should maintain the two and three storey Commercial Street scale. Opportunities off of Commercial Street may be considered where additional storeys would not harm the existing low street scale. This is the area of Downtown which can best accommodate a lively mix of uses, where residents expect to live in an environment where clubs, cultural and entertainment uses and shopping happily coexist.

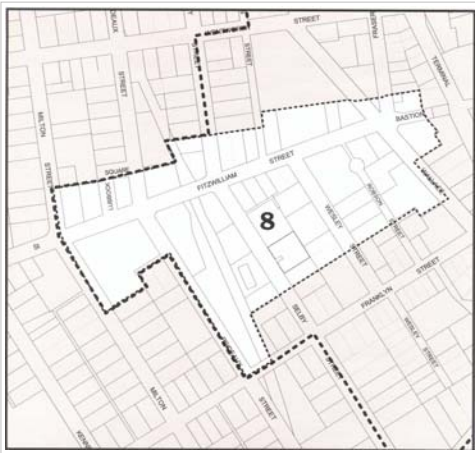
Action

Encourage Intensification while Retaining Scale and Character

Action 1 Prepare zoning and design guidelines to permit conversion and infill development of a variety of uses while ensuring that the scale and character of the area is maintained and enhanced.



4.9.8 Fitzwilliam



Already established as an attractive mixed-use area focused on an old style shopping street, the policy here is to encourage and strengthen this character with infill medium rise apartments and townhouses and the consolidation of the shopping street. Fitzwilliam also functions as a major entrance way to Downtown and is the significant link between Downtown and the old railway station which has significant potential for future commuter and tourist traffic serving the Downtown area.

Consequently it is important to prepare a comprehensive streetscape plan for the street.

This would provide for the coordination of street furnishings, paving and private property improvements to create an overall distinctive theme for the Street. The plan would include guidance for street lighting, banner programs, street trees, bus stops, garbage receptacles, sidewalk cafes, canopies and the scale and character of the adjoining buildings. Extensions of the scale and character would

be encouraged onto side streets which would become more residential than retail and business oriented.

Actions

Reinforce the Fitzwilliam Character

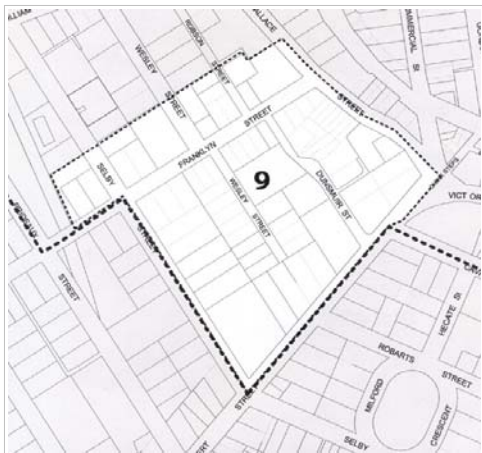
Action 1 Prepare design guidelines to reinforce the emerging character of Fitzwilliam as an old style shopping street flanked by mixed, but mainly residential medium rise street oriented uses, and serving as a major entry way to Downtown.

A Streetscape Plan

Action 2 Prepare and implement a streetscape plan for Fitzwilliam Street as a primary character area and entry way to Downtown.



4.9.9 Quennell Square



While this area accommodates some interesting heritage structures, it consists primarily of City Hall and its annexes and significant areas of underdeveloped lands. The significant amount of publicly owned lands coupled with central location provide an ideal set of circumstances for public/private partnership developments of a comprehensive nature. This means that a new mixed use business office, residential neighbourhood could be planned with emphasis given to creating an environment especially conducive to offices and housing which complements the existing major civic enclave. Over the longer term, an attractive, diverse community designed around sequences of walkways, mews and open spaces could be developed. Through comprehensive site planning of large sites, high-rise towers which would not intrude on valuable public views from the Old City neighbourhoods to the west, could be considered.

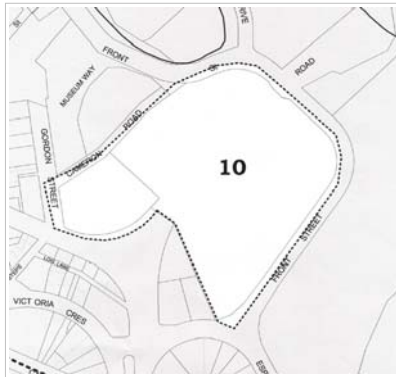
Action

A New Mixed Use Neighbourhood

Action 1 Prepare a comprehensive phased plan for the development, over time, of a mixed residential/business oriented neighbourhood which is compatible with the civic precinct and improves connection to the Downtown core area.



4.9.10 Harbour Park



In the longer term, this area offers the opportunity to create a significant residential/commercial community which anchors this south end of Downtown and links the waterfront walkway system back into the primary Commercial Street shopping and cultural area.

The size, location and configuration of the site lends itself to a comprehensive plan of development including a major retail centre topped by a new low, medium and high-rise residential community.

Higher density in the form of highrises is supported in portions of the Harbour Park area, as identified in Section 5.1 "Land Use."

Guidelines for the development of highrises in the character area include the following:

Minimum Lot Area:

4180.5 square metres (45,000 square feet)

Setbacks:

23 metres (75 feet) for all yards

Separation Between Towers:

45.72 metres (150 feet)

Maximum Floor Plate:

594.56 square metres (6400 square feet)
for those floors six storeys or above, with a maximum depth and width of 24.38 metres (80 feet).

(2004-Dec-13)

Action

Comprehensive Vision for a New Community

Action 1 Encourage the owners of the Harbour Park mall centre to develop their lands for a major retail centre with an integrated high density residential community.



4.9.11 Study Area #2 Southern Waterfront

In the longer term, it is likely that the present ferry, port and industrial uses will change over time. Before that occurs, it will be important to have a plan and implementation strategy prepared for the area. The determination of desirable uses and development forms is best left until the area becomes available for redevelopment so that current conditions in the Downtown and the development market can be assessed.

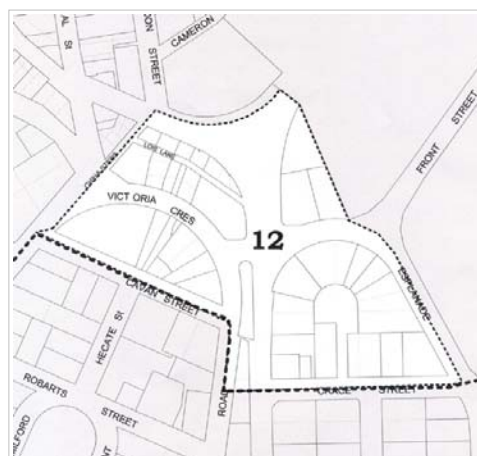
Action

Planning Study

Action 1 Prepare a concept plan and implementation strategy for this area when it is apparent that it will undergo change.



4.9.12 South Gate



As the main entrance route from the south approaches Downtown it takes a sharp turn to the west before proceeding along Terminal Avenue ravine. Here is another Gateway opportunity to add to the enjoyment and recognition of Downtown. This could be expressed by locating significant Gateway buildings on either side of the entry and by creating a new major public urban square framed by a new Harbour Park and the street walls of the new Gateway buildings and the crescent of Terminal Avenue.

Action

Gateway to Downtown

Action 1 Develop Design Guidelines, zoning and implementation strategies to encourage the creation of a special Gateway experience at this location.



LAND USE AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT



This section sets out the direction to be taken in developing the Zoning Bylaw amendments that will regulate and guide development to implement the objectives of the Plan. These regulations will be primarily concerned with permitted land uses, densities and forms of development.

5.1 Land Use

While the intention is to encourage a diversity of uses throughout Downtown, each of the twelve distinct character areas will have a different land use emphasis than the others. Some will encourage a different predominant use than others and some uses will not be appropriate in all areas. For example, where residential neighbourhoods are planned, a number of Downtown uses, especially those which could be incompatible with the desired residential environment, such as clubs and bars, would be incompatible and are not permitted in those areas.

Uses fall into three categories; those which are permitted “as-a-right”; those which may be permitted provided they conform with stated design guidelines or other conditions, “conditional”; and those which are “not permitted”.

The overall land uses proposed are shown on the adjoining Proposed Land Use Plan.

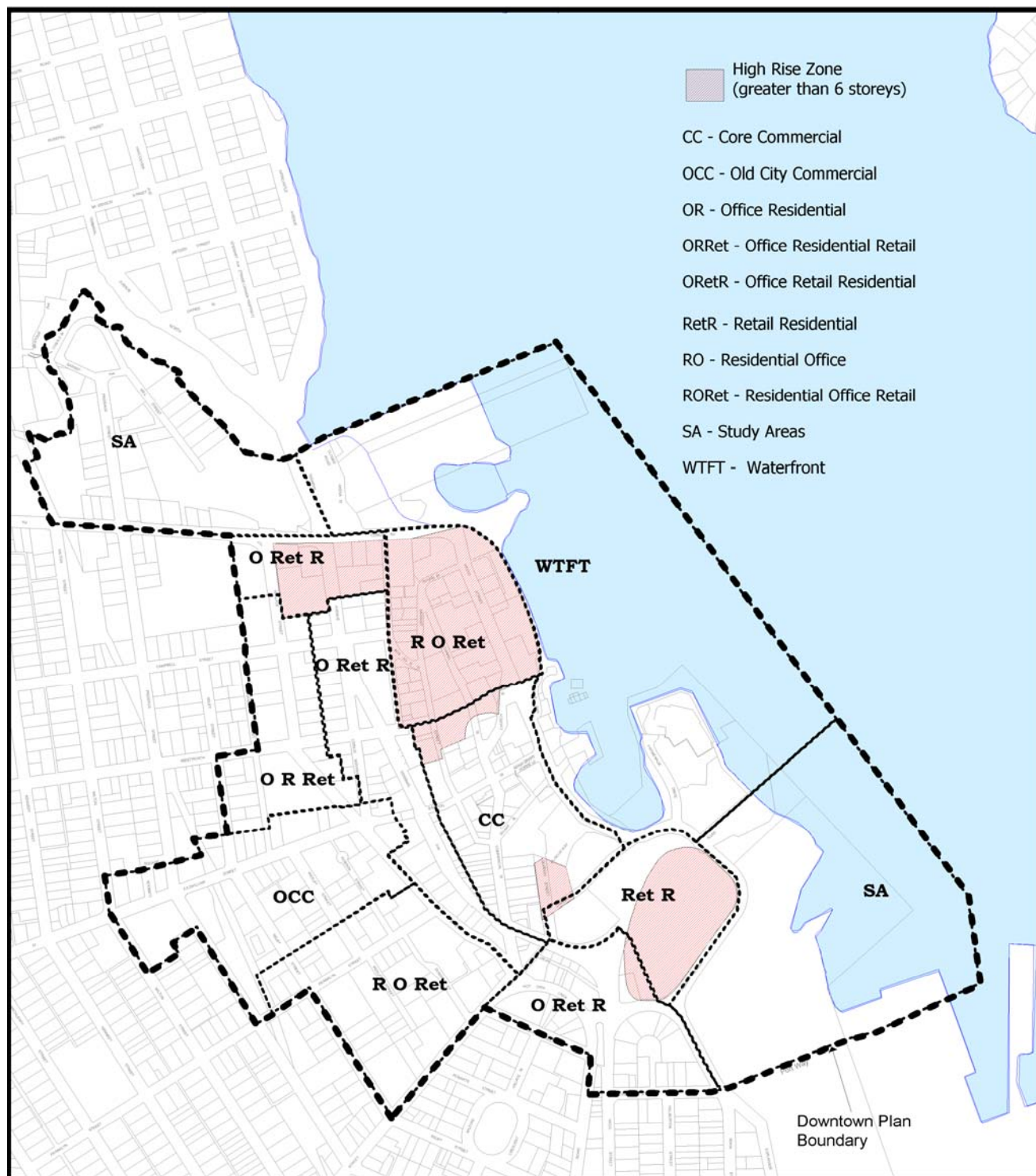
Action

New Zoning

Action 1 Amend the Zoning Bylaw to accurately prescribe permitted land uses to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.

5.1 Land Use

(2004-Dec-13)



Land Use and Form

5.2 Density and Form

The Downtown Concept Plan and the Policies and Actions describe the intended densities and form of development for Downtown. Key to the future shape of Downtown are the Urban Design Policies and the description of each of the twelve character areas.

The distinctiveness of the twelve character areas will be derived from the regulations and guidelines which control the density and form of new developments. Some of these directions will be contained as mandatory regulations in the Zoning Bylaw with which new developments must conform.

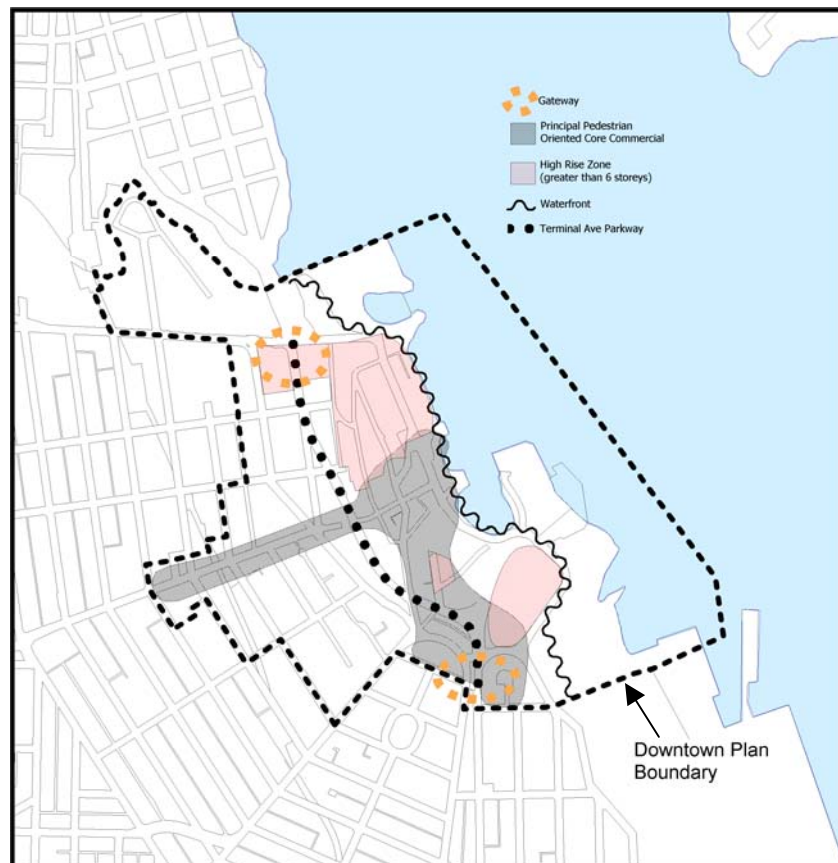
Design guidelines will also be prepared and made available to guide new developments. These are not mandatory requirements but provide numerous design suggestions for those preparing or approving developments Downtown. The designer has to use judgement in balancing the guidelines against the particular site conditions of the actual site where development is proposed.

Action

New Zoning

Action 1 Amend the Zoning Bylaw to accurately prescribe permitted densities and forms to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.

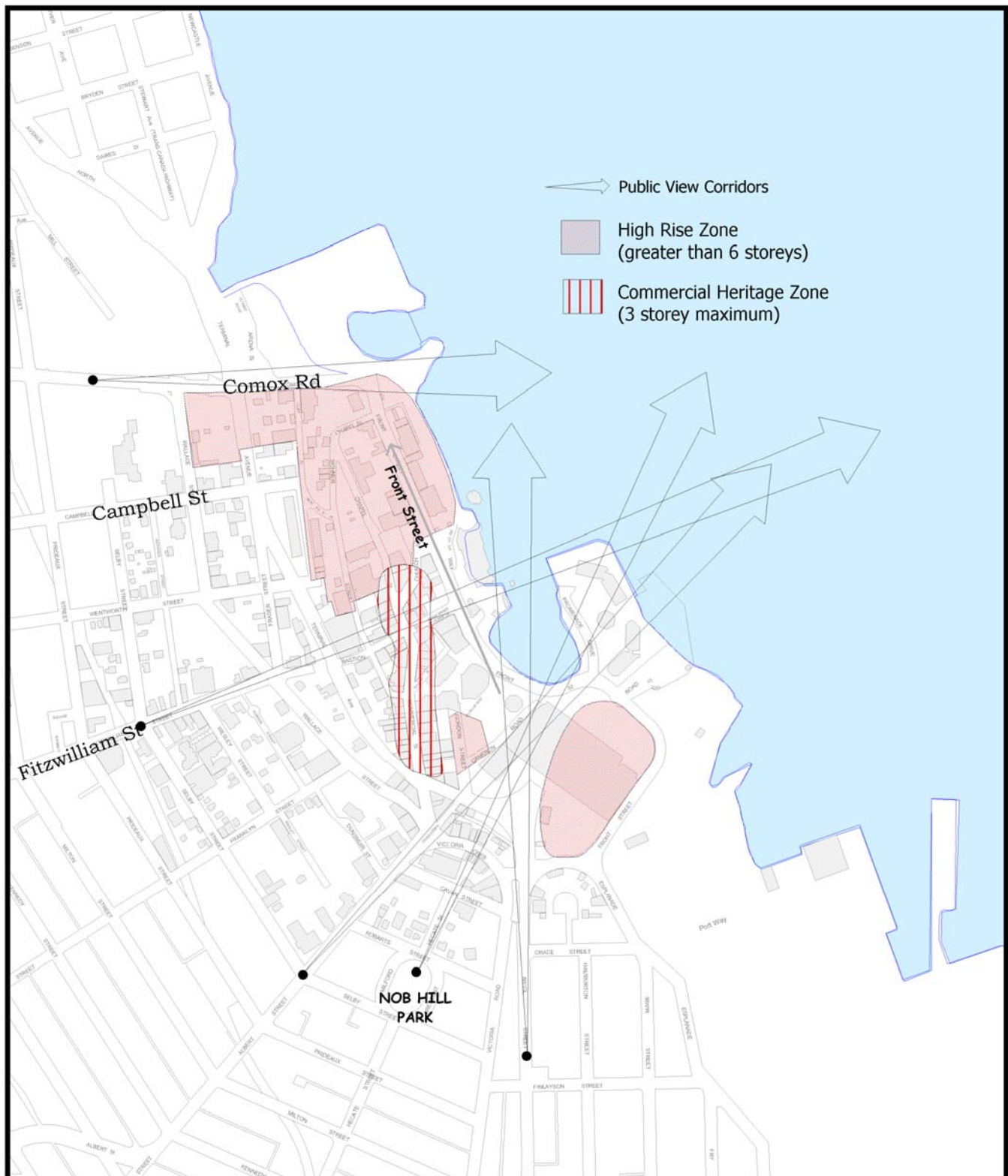
Action 2 Adopt specific urban design guidelines to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.



2004-Dec-13

5.2 Density and Form

(2004-Dec-13)



**PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

The success of the Downtown Plan will be measured by the degree to which the Plan policies become a reality. The implementation program will achieve credibility if tangible results can be realized.

This chapter summarizes the implementation program, referred to as the Downtown Action Program and includes the approach to financing the five-year and beyond program.

6.1 Plan Budget and Financing Strategy

As the implementation budget depends largely on funding mechanisms, the budget must be flexible. Using the actions summarized in Section 6.3, an Implementation Report will be prepared for Council annually outlining:

- the status of action items that were underway in the previous budget year; and
- proposed actions for the current budget year.

The Downtown Plan financing strategy is that:

1. the City of Nanaimo designate funds from its Capital Budget Plan to implement the major projects, studies and programs identified in the Downtown Plan. These designated funds are currently available as an operating contribution to the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership and capital funds managed by Council for special projects Downtown.

Additional budgets for specific actions in the Plan where the City is the initiator and/or takes the lead role, will be funded from existing budgets where appropriate and appear in the Five-year Financial Plan or come before Council as a higher service level request.

2. smaller studies and regular operating programs be funded through the normal operating budgets of City departments or through partnerships with private sector organizations and businesses.

3. the City form partnerships with the provincial and federal governments to fund certain programs and projects identified in the Downtown Plan. The partnerships could either be in the form of new project-specific funding partnerships or as sub agreements under an existing tri-level government agreement or the Canada Infrastructure Works Program.
4. many of the actions in the Downtown Plan are currently on the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership's work plan. Those actions to be initiated by the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership but not on a work plan, will be discussed by the Partnership, prioritized and an annual work plan developed to be approved by the Partnership under its existing operating budget. Related to the overall actions in the Downtown Plan, those actions not to be initiated by the Partnership may be discussed by the Partnership and a recommendation regarding implementation forwarded to the Downtown Centre Standing Committee for consideration.

6.2 Incentive Package and One-Stop Review Process

The following incentives have been put in place to assist Downtown property owners and developers in their efforts to revitalize Downtown under the strategies of increased residential development, increased employee based business and increased arts, culture and entertainment presence in the Downtown.

1. **Development Cost Charges** have been removed for a limited period of time to encourage residential development Downtown. Information regarding the boundaries within which Development Cost Charges no longer apply and the time frame for the incentive are available at City Hall.
2. **Parking** requirements have been reduced considerably in portions of the Old City bowl and Downtown area in an effort to encourage infill and upper-storey residential development.
3. Policies are in place for a **tax exemption for residential conversion** on selected heritage buildings. The exemption is intended to assist property owners with the cost of seismic upgrading, sprinkler systems and façade improvements required when converting upper storeys to residential use.
4. Information is available from the Partnership summarizing findings from a **Residential Market Analysis study** and an **inventory** of available properties with development potential.
5. The City is prepared to deal with Downtown development applications on a **one-stop review process basis**. This is an effort to help move applications along in the Downtown where projects tend to be more difficult and therefore, take more time than other areas of the city due to infill and topographical issues.

6.3 Downtown Action Program

A logical implementation procedure is vital to the success of the Downtown Plan. A carefully planned sequence of activities, concentrating efforts in the next three years, will best see the Downtown capture the energy and efforts of the City and the many organizations and individuals presently involved in Downtown improvements.

The 120 actions, which make up the Downtown Action Program are summarized in the table on pages 59-68. Actions are organized by subject category as set out in Chapter 4 of the Plan. The actions include studies, capital works programs, special programs, new processes and regulations.

The actions listed in the following table are described in terms of their type, funding, time frame and implementation responsibility. Using the table, the initiator reviews proposed actions and groups related actions into project areas. The project areas will then be prioritized and priority actions included in a proposed work plan. Resource availability must be confirmed before the work plan is finalized.

Recommendations for the use of the Downtown capital project budget will go to the Downtown Centre Standing Committee and then to Council for discussion and final decision. Actions that use existing budgets will require approval under existing organizational structures. New money requires a higher service level request to Council as part of annual budget deliberation.

Grant opportunities will be pursued by the initiator prior to including the action on the work plan.

An annual report, indicating progress on current actions and the rationale and budget details for proposed actions to be undertaken in the following year, need to accompany the annual proposed work plan.

Key to Action Plan Chart:

DNP	Downtown Nanaimo Partnership
DSD	Development Services Department
PRC	Parks, Recreation & Culture Department
Cult.Com.	Cultural Committee
NCHC	Nanaimo Community Heritage Commission
Eng.	Engineering Division
SPAC	Social Planning Advisory Committee
Com.Pl	Community Planning Division
RDN	Regional District of Nanaimo
VIA	VIA Rail
Dev.	Development Community
Ec.Dev.	Economic Development Division
PW	Public Works Department
E	Existing Budget
N	New Money
Neigh.Assoc.	Neighbourhood Association
Parking Com.	Parking Committee
Port Auth.	Port Authority
Min. of Transp.	Ministry of Transportation

Action Plan Chart

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Economic Development							
<i>An Economic Vision for Downtown</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Encourage investment and attract people, actively promote the Downtown.	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
Action 2 Facilitate networking and strategic partnerships.	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
<i>Strong Downtown Economy</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Clarify the roles of the key stakeholders.	DNP	DNP	E		✓		
Action 2 Develop and implement a Downtown Business Plan.	DNP	DNP	E		✓		
Action 3 Consider the creation of a Downtown Development Corporation.	DNP	DNP	E		✓		
Action 4 Implement a program to recruit new businesses.	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
Action 5 Identify policies and actions that will encourage existing businesses and community services to remain in the core area.	DNP	DNP	E		✓		
Action 6 Continue to explore opportunities for incentives.	City	City					✓
Action 7 Develop a market identification that advertises the Downtown as the heart of the community.	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
Action 8 Remove unintentional policy barriers that may discourage investment.	City	DSD	E				✓
<i>Quality Development</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Adopt land use regulations, guidelines and administrative processes that support quality development in the Downtown, encouraging flexibility and design innovation.	City	DSD	E	✓			
<i>Concentration of Government Offices</i>							
Policy 4 Action 1 Actively market Downtown to both levels of government.	DNP	DNP	E				✓
<i>Centre of Academic Excellence</i>							
Policy 5 Action 1 Encourage a university presence in the form of a campus and other facilities.	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
Action 2 Work with Malaspina University College (MUC) to identify public/private partnerships	DNP	DNP	E	✓			
Action 3 Encourage supportive services, programs and facilities for Downtown residents, staff and students.	DNP	DNP/City	E		✓		
Action 4 Coordinate with the convention centre and Downtown hotels, to promote regionally based educational opportunities.	DNP	DNP	E				✓
<i>Tourism Infrastructure</i>							
Policy 6 Action 1 In conjunction with Tourism Nanaimo prepare and implement a Downtown Tourism Plan.	DNP/Tourism	DNP/Tourism	E		✓		

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Arts, Culture and Entertainment							
<i>Intensify Downtown Arts and Culture</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Intensify the use of existing arts and cultural facilities, and encourage the development of complementary activities.	DNP/City/Community Groups	PRC/Cult.Com.	E				✓
Action 2 Explore opportunities to utilize existing heritage and other buildings for arts and culture facilities while ensuring that the location of such facilities is appropriate to the nature of the proposed Downtown Character areas.	DNP/City/Community Groups	PRC/Cult.Com.	E/N			✓	
Action 3 Develop programs to encourage artists, arts and cultural groups, and related professionals to find working and living space in the Downtown.	DNP/Community Groups	DNP	E				✓
<i>Downtown Public Art</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Work with the Cultural Committee to promote the "Art in Public Places Policy".	DNP/City	PRC/Cult.Com.	E				✓
Action 2 Encourage private developers to incorporate public art into their projects.	City	DSD	Cost of dev.				✓
<i>Marketing and Financial Support</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Continue private/public sector partnerships to promote year round festivals, arts, cultural and community events as part of the Downtown Nanaimo experience.	Community Groups/DNP/Tourism/City	PRC/Cult. Com./DNP	E				✓
Action 2 Continue to provide financial support through municipal grant assistance to established and emerging Downtown arts and cultural groups and programs.	City	Applicant	E - Grants in Aid/PRC/Cult.Co m./DT Fund				✓
Action 3 Continue to facilitate financial support from other levels of government, foundations and private donors.	DNP/Community Groups/Tourism	DNP/Community Groups/Tourism	E				✓
Action 4 Provide strong support in principle for Downtown (through letters of support)	City	City	E				✓

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Housing and Community Development							
<i>Downtown Housing Targets</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Stimulate Downtown housing development by expanding areas zoned for residential development and encouraging high density and high-rise residential in specified areas.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 2 Continue to encourage the conversion of Downtown heritage buildings to residential use.	City/DNP	NCHC/DSD/DNP	E	✓			
Action 3 Continue to examine ways to provide more flexibility in the application of Building Code regulations.	City	Building Div.	E	✓			
Action 4 Implement a Downtown housing marketing program.	DNP	DNP	E		✓		
Action 5 Maintain a listing of housing available in the Downtown.	DNP	Realtors	E				✓
Action 6 Explore options for funding and implementing improvements to the residential environment through public improvements to streets, parks and open spaces.	DNP/City	Eng.	N (City) or E/grant (DNP)				✓
Action 7 Discuss Local Area Improvement cost share formulas and methods for implementation where there is a Downtown community benefit and no adjacent property owners.	City	Com.Pl./Finance	E	✓			
<i>Downtown Residents</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Encourage a wide range of housing choice.	DNP/City	City Policy	E				✓
Action 2 Develop an action plan to address the housing needs of low income and special needs households in the Downtown.	City	Com.Pl./SPAC	E		✓		
Action 3 Consider the use of incentives to ensure opportunities for the development of affordable and special needs housing.	DNP	DSD	N				✓
<i>Community Development in the Downtown</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Establish a community development program in the Downtown.	City	Com.Pl./SPAC	E		✓		
Action 2 Support Downtown residents in establishing a representative neighbourhood association.	City	Com.Pl./Neigh. Assoc.	E				✓
Action 3 Determine, in consultation with Downtown stakeholders, the need for new community amenity space.	City	Com.Pl./PRC/DNP	E				✓
Policy 4 Action 1 Support the development of a crime prevention program.	City/DNP	City/DNP/RCMP	E		✓		
Action 2 Maintain a Community Police Station in the Downtown and operate crime prevention programs.	City/Neigh. Assoc.	RCMP/Com.Pl./Neigh. Assoc.	E				✓
Action 3 Ensure that all designs for residential buildings are reviewed using CEPTED.	City	DSD	E				✓

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Transportation Systems							
Policy 1 Action 1 Develop a Downtown Transportation Plan.	City	Eng./Com.Pln.	N		✓		
Pedestrian Emphasis							
<i>A Quality Pedestrian Environment</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Provide amenities for pedestrians throughout the Downtown, by implementing streetscape plans and design guidelines.	City	DSD/DNP	N	✓			
Action 2 Establish a policy and procedures whereby improvements to the pedestrian environment are incorporated as a significant component in funding and implementing roadway improvements in the Downtown.	City	Com.Pln./DSD/Eng.	E				✓
Action 3 Encourage continuous weather protection on main pedestrian routes, especially on shopping streets.	Dev.	Dev.	Cost of dev.				✓
Action 4 Improve and expand the pedestrian circulation network to link important destinations.	City/Dev.	PRC	Cost of dev./N		✓		
Action 5 Strengthen connections by identifying missing pedestrian linkages.	City	PRC	E		✓		
Action 6 Establish a pedestrian signage/ mapping system.	City	Com.Pln./PRC	E		✓		
<i>Transportation Management Measures</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Review the operation of the transportation management system.	City	Eng./Com.Pln.	E		✓		
Action 2 Consider the importance of pedestrian mobility in the Downtown.	City	Eng./ComPln./PRC	E				✓
<i>Safety, Maintenance and Accessibility</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Explore options for improving intersection design and traffic calming and permitting mid-block crossings.	City	Eng./Com.Pln.	E				✓
Bicycle Routes							
<i>A Bicycle Friendly Downtown</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Continue to develop integrated on-road and off-road cycle routes to and within Downtown.	City	PRC	E/N				✓
Action 2 Provide and encourage development of end-of-trip facilities.	City/DNP	PRC/Dev./DNP	E/N				✓
Public Transit							
<i>Transit First</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Develop an easy-to-use Downtown transit route network that integrates with other transportation modes.	DNP/RDN	RDN	E				✓
Action 2 Improve bus stops with better shelters and route information displays.	DNP/RDN	RDN	E/N				✓
Action 3 Develop options for and implement a shuttle bus to connect high traffic destinations in the Downtown.	DNP/RDN	RDN	E		✓		

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Road Network							
Policy 1 Action 1 Review the hierarchy of roads to ensure that Downtown oriented traffic needs are met.	City	Eng.			✓		
Action 2 Provide a comprehensive signage system to clarify the road system and access to and within Downtown.	City	Eng./Com.Pln.	E	✓			
Action 3 Enhance the following major entry routes to Downtown: Fitzwilliam Street, Nicol Street, Terminal Avenue, Comox Road and Albert Street.	City	Eng./Com.Pln.	N				✓

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
					Immed.	Short	Long
Parking							
<i>Downtown Parking</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Provide efficient and effective management of Downtown parking.	City	Clerk's Office/Parking Com.	E	✓			
Action 2 Include parking signage in an overall signage study for Downtown.	City	Com.Pltn.	E		✓		
<i>Diversified Proactive Approach to Short-Term Parking</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Parking Committee to review parking policies for Downtown.	City	Clerk's Office/Parking Com.	E	✓			
<i>Employee Parking</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Work towards ensuring adequate employee parking and access to alternative travel modes.	DNP/City	Clerk's Office/Parking Com.			✓		
<i>Residential Parking Requirements</i>							
Policy 4 Action 1 Maintain reduced parking requirements for residential development in the Downtown.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Truck Routes							
<i>Truck Route Network</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Assess adequacy of the truck route network and its operations.	City	Eng.	E		✓		
Action 2 Provide clear truck route information and signage.	City	Eng.	E		✓		
Ferry, Air and Rail Service							
<i>By Air</i>							
Policy 1 Encourage continual growth of air services available on the Downtown waterfront.	Port Auth./private	Port Auth./private	E/N				✓
<i>By Water</i>							
Policy 2 Encourage the development of a passenger ferry connection to Downtown Vancouver.	Port Auth./private	Port Auth./private	E/N	✓			
<i>By Rail</i>							
Policy 3 Encourage the improvement of rail service to provide commuter and tourism access to Downtown.	VIA/Min. of Transp./Transport Canada	Municipalities along rail corridor	N	✓			

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Parks, Open Space and Recreation							
<i>Provision of Parks and Open Space</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Determine the open space needs for a new and growing population and a mechanism for acquiring lands needed for parks and urban open spaces.	City	PRC	E		✓		
Action 2 Encourage the creation of interest and surprise throughout the Downtown using available corners, alleys, rooftops and nooks for innovative open spaces.	City/DNP/Dev.	City/DNP/Dev.	E/N				✓
<i>Active Use of Open Spaces</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Develop existing and new public open space to accommodate uses such as open area markets, street vendors, sidewalk cafes, artwork and exhibits.	City	Dev./DNP	E/N				✓
<i>Park Safety</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Ensure plans for new parks and for the redevelopment of existing parks following design guidelines for crime prevention.	City	PRC	E				✓

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Historic Preservation							
<i>Encourage Preservation</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Develop programs providing financial and administrative support to promote the rehabilitation and re-use of historic resources.	City	NCHC/DSD	E				✓
<i>Promote the Benefits of Historic Preservation</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Provide information and advice to owners, developers, interest groups, individuals and the media to foster a sense of ownership and pride in Downtown buildings and history.	City	NCHC/DSD	E				✓
Action 2 Maintain a communication program to promote the benefits of historic preservation.	City	NCHC/DSD	E				✓
<i>Heritage Organizations</i>							
Policy 3 Action 1 Involve the local community in historic preservation activities.	City	NCHC/DSD	E				✓
Action 2 Provide advice and assistance to undertake rehabilitation initiatives.	City	DSD	E				✓
<i>Rehabilitation and Re-use of Historic Properties</i>							
Policy 4 Action 1 Promote the re-use of historic properties by providing advice, incentives, exemptions and compensation to owners.	City	NCHC/DSD	E				✓
Action 2 Encourage civic departments, as well as governments and government-funded agencies and socio-cultural groups to locate their offices and activities in heritage buildings.	City/DNP	DNP/DSD/Ec.Dev	E				✓
<i>The Architectural Integrity of Buildings</i>							
Policy 5 Action 1 Provide design guidelines and flexible regulations appropriate to the historic character of the buildings and the area.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 2 Ensure that infill developments, renovations and additions to existing buildings respect the historical nature of adjacent and/or neighbouring properties.	City/NCHC	DSD	E				✓
Natural Environment							
<i>A Greener Downtown</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Maintain and expand the quality and quantity of natural vegetation and trees.	City/Dev.	PRC/Property owners	E/N				✓
<i>Stormwater Management</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Continue to employ best stormwater management practices.	City	Eng.	E/N				✓
Action 2 Initiate further study for additional approaches for dealing with stormwater.	City	Com.Pl.n.	E/N			✓	

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
					Immed.	Short	On-going
Urban Design							
<i>An Attractive and Livable Downtown</i>							
Policy 1 Action 1 Prepare a specific urban design strategy for Downtown.	City/DNP	DSD	E	✓			
Action 2 Adopt urban design guidelines.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 3 Provide guidelines for the design and integration of new developments.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 4 Ensure that new developments incorporate human scale design principles.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 5 Ensure that where a building fronts onto the street, it is designed to minimize blank walls.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 6 Ensure the design of a building complements its neighbouring structures to create a coordinated streetscape.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 7 Ensure that the design of any new development does not create adverse wind conditions.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 8 Ensure that new developments allow sun penetration to streets and open spaces.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 9 Encourage the provision of continuous weather protection.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 10 Ensure that the siting of new developments maintains and enhances existing views, vistas and visual corridors, and where possible, creates new ones.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 11 Locate artwork in prominent public spaces and encourage the inclusion of artworks and/ or performing arts programs in public and private developments.	City/DNP	PRC	E				✓
Action 12 Provide a system of distinctive, clear and well designed public signs in the Downtown.	City/DNP	Com.Pln/PW	E		✓		
<i>The Distinctive Areas of Downtown</i>							
Policy 2 Action 1 Prepare specific land use, density and form regulations and guidelines.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 2 Identify and retain the special topographical features of Downtown Nanaimo.	City	DSD/Com.Pln.	E	✓			
Action 3 Encourage the development of special buildings to distinguish the main entrances.	City	DSD	N		✓		
Policy 3 Action 1 Develop a program of streetscape improvements for the main approach routes to Downtown.	City/DNP	Com.Pln/Eng/ DNP	E/N	✓			
Action 2 Strengthen the special identity of each Downtown character area.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 3 Develop streetscape and urban design concepts and implementation strategies for special streets.	City/DNP cost share	Com.Pln./DNP	N/E	✓			
Action 4 Provide for high quality amenities and the visual interest of the pedestrian.	City/DNP	DSD/Eng.	N				✓
Action 5 Prepare a Downtown Lighting Program.	City/DNP	City	N			✓	
Action 6 Encourage activities like sidewalk cafes, open air markets, street vendors and year round programmed events on sidewalks and open spaces in commercial areas.	City/DNP	DSD/Eng/DNP	E/N				✓

Nanaimo Downtown Plan

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Character Areas							
Future Study Area 1							
<i>Planning Study</i>							
Action 1 Undertake a study of the area to determine planning guidelines for its future development.	City	Com.Pln.	N			✓	
Waterfront							
<i>Waterfront Walkway</i>							
Action 1 Protect and enhance the waterfront walkway.	City/Port Auth.	City/Port Auth.					✓
<i>Waterfront/ Downtown Relationship</i>							
Action 2 Develop design guidelines.	City/Port Auth.	City/Port Auth.				✓	
<i>Linkages to Downtown</i>							
Action 3 Develop a strategy to create stronger more attractive and convenient pedestrian linkages.	City/Port Auth.	Com.Pln./PRC	Pedestrian Master Plan		✓		
North Gate							
<i>Gateway to Downtown</i>							
Action 1 Permit higher densities on these sites on condition that the buildings express the Gateway theme.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Chapel Front							
<i>A New High Density Residential Area</i>							
Action 1 Prepare new zoning and design guidelines.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Wallace							
<i>Develop and Integrate with Terminal Avenue Developments</i>							
Action 1 Prepare new zoning and design guidelines.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Terminal Parkway							
<i>Terminal as Greenway</i>							
Action 1 Prepare a design plan and implementation strategy.	City	Com.Pln.	N			✓	
Core							
<i>Encourage Intensification while Retaining Scale and Character</i>							
Action 1 Prepare zoning and design guidelines to permit conversion and infill.	City	DSD	E	✓			

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ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
					Immed.	Short	Long
Fitzwilliam							
<i>Reinforce the Fitzwilliam Character</i>							
Action 1 Prepare design guidelines to reinforce the emerging character of Fitzwilliam as an old style shopping street flanked by mixed, but mainly residential medium rise street oriented uses, and serving as a major entry way to Downtown.	City	DSD	E	✓			
<i>A Streetscape Plan</i>							
Action 2 Prepare and implement a streetscape plan for Fitzwilliam Street as a primary character area and entry way to Downtown.	City	PW	E	✓			
Quennell Square							
<i>A New Mixed Use Neighbourhood</i>							
Action 1 Prepare a comprehensive phased plan for the development.	City	DSD	N		✓		
Harbour Park							
<i>Comprehensive Vision for a New Community</i>							
Action 1 Encourage the owners of the Harbour Park mall centre to develop their lands for a major retail centre with an integrated high density residential community.	City/Property owner	Property owner				✓	
Study Area 2 Southern Waterfront							
<i>Planning Study</i>							
Action 1 Prepare a concept plan and implementation strategy for this area.	City	Com.Pln.	N		✓		
South Gate							
<i>Gateway to Downtown</i>							
Action 1 Develop Design Guidelines, zoning and implementation strategies to encourage the creation of a special Gateway experience at this location.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Land Use							
<i>New Zoning</i>							
Action 1 Amend the Zoning Bylaw to accurately prescribe permitted land uses to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.	City	DSD	E	✓			

ACTION	Initiating Role	Lead Role	Existing Budget/ New Money	Time Frame			
				Immed.	Short	Long	On-going
Density and Form							
New Zoning							
Action 1 Amend the Zoning Bylaw to accurately prescribe permitted densities and forms to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.	City	DSD	E	✓			
Action 2 Adopt specific urban design guidelines to reflect the intentions of the Downtown Plan.	City	DSD	E	✓			

6.4 Plan Operation

The implementation of the Downtown Plan will be a cooperative effort involving both public and private sector Downtown stakeholders. The Downtown Action Program indicates a strong role for the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership as well as the City. The existence of the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership opens many opportunities for actions that are beyond current municipal resources or outside the powers of the municipality under the *Local Government Act*.

The Downtown Action Program will provide the direction for implementation. The existing Downtown Nanaimo Partnership and City Hall processes will be the organizational structure for initiating those actions within their control and/or influence. The Partnership, through the reporting structure, will provide recommendations on priority actions to assist Council in determining the best use of the Downtown capital budget.

If restructuring of the Downtown Nanaimo Partnership occurs in the future where its current status as a committee of Council changes and the Partnership becomes an independent Downtown organization, initiating and lead roles may remain as outlined in the Downtown Action Program, provided mandates and resources remain substantially unchanged.

If the Partnership is dissolved, those actions within the control and/or influence of the Partnership cannot be undertaken under any existing City organizational structures. Those

actions identified as City initiatives will continue to be considered during annual work plan preparation.

**APPENDIX A - Downtown
Demographics**

**APPENDIX B - Residential
Market Analysis**

**APPENDIX C - Indicators of
Progress**