SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR NANAIMO

Prepared for:
The Social Development Strategy Steering Committee

Prepared by:
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Acknowledgements

The preparation of this strategy would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of the Social Development Strategy Steering Committee, whose members are listed on page 43, and funding support from the City of Nanaimo and The Vancouver Foundation. The steering committee met on five occasions to oversee the preparation of the strategy. Individual members also volunteered as small group leaders and recorders at all major community consultation events.

The preparation of this strategy would not have been possible without the involvement of all partnering agencies as listed on this page and those people who provided information throughout the community consultation process, including all who agreed to be interviewed and all who attended consultation events. Your commitment and dedication to making Nanaimo a better place to live is truly commendable.
The Social Development Strategy defines a social vision for Nanaimo, goals to achieve that vision and strategies to achieve those goals. It was commissioned in response to a number of significant social issues which threaten the quality of life of all residents, including high rates of income assistance, increasing homelessness and poverty, persistently high unemployment levels and substance misuse issues.

To prepare the strategy, a Social Development Strategy Steering Committee was established (see page 43) and a consultant was retained. As a first step of the work, the steering committee developed an extensive community consultation process. This process commenced in November 2003 and concluded in mid-June 2004. In total, about 500 residents were involved and their input was instrumental in shaping the strategy. Where possible, quotes have been incorporated throughout the strategy to capture the emotion and passion of those who participated.

Of significance, the strategy acknowledges and builds on the many positive initiatives occurring in Nanaimo and sets forth specific strategies to address the identified social issues in the following six major areas of focus:

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Together, these strategies are designed to achieve the vision of creating a community which nurtures a caring, healthy, inclusive and safe environment; while empowering its citizens to realize their aspirations and hopes.

Key to achieving this vision is the need for a designated body to champion and take ownership of the strategy and to ensure its implementation. To this end, the steering committee has recommended the establishment of a Social Development Group, with an executive and larger membership. As envisioned (see page 38), this body would include all major stakeholders with a mandate and/or interest in the area of social development.

The steering committee and community consultation participants emphasized the importance of moving from planning to action. It was noted that the social issues have been documented and a vision and plan of action is in place to move forward. As one participant stated: “Individual action and narrowly defined mandates will not solve our social issues.” “Instead, we need inspired leadership, collective action and dedicated resources, as well as the belief that tomorrow can actually be better than today.”
About the Strategy:

The Social Development Strategy for Nanaimo (hereafter referred to as the strategy) was commissioned in response to a number of significant social issues which threaten the quality of life of all residents, including high rates of income assistance, increasing homelessness and poverty, persistently high unemployment levels and substance misuse issues.

To develop the strategy, a Social Development Strategy Steering Committee (hereafter referred to as the steering committee) was established (see Appendix 1) and a consultant was retained. As a first phase of the work, a Social Status Report (May 2003) was prepared, which tracked 50 indicators and answered the question: “Where are we now from a social perspective?” For more information about this report, refer to page 11.

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Social problems are present and persistent in all cities. Nanaimo is no longer a small rural town, and increasingly, it will experience social problems that attend to urban development. But organized crime, drug and alcohol abuse and poverty are not new to Nanaimo, and attempts to combat them have been insufficient and unsuccessful. The response has, for the most part, been silence and avoidance.

The next phase of the work and the focus of the strategy is to answer two related questions: “Where do we want to go?” and “How do we get there?” To this end, the steering committee developed a community consultation process to solicit input into defining a social vision for Nanaimo, goals to achieve that vision and strategies to achieve those goals.

As envisioned, the strategy will:

- focus social planning work by building consensus and setting priorities;
- identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership in addressing social issues;
- identify new community development initiatives in order to improve livability and quality of life;
- serve as a guide and resource for government, community groups and service providers in both program planning and service delivery.

The strategy also incorporates an implementation framework to assist in the achievement of the proposed goals and suggested strategies and a monitoring and evaluation framework to review and report on progress toward their achievement.

**Context for the Strategy**

Based on the community consultation and a review of the background documentation, the following major trends, opportunities and issues are highlighted in order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the context in which the strategy was developed:

- **Aging Population:**

  Nanaimo has an aging population, as evidenced by the fact that the median age was 36.5 years in 1996 and 40.4 years in 2001. Additionally, between 2001 and 2026, the total number of people 65+ in the Nanaimo Local Health Area is projected to more than double from 14,650 to 31,328 (BC Stats, PEOPLE Run 26 Data). This aging of the population will create many new opportunities for business and investment. It will also significantly impact facilities, programs and services, especially in the areas of health, housing, recreation and transportation.

  We need to start planning for our aging population. Currently, we cannot meet the housing and long term care needs of our seniors. This raises the question: What happens when this population more than doubles? We need to do more to reassure seniors that their future is secure.
  
  (Seniors Focus Group Participant)
• **Shifting Economic Base:**

Nanaimo is shifting from a resource based economy that traditionally relied on natural resources, towards an information, knowledge and service based economy. While this shift has created new opportunities for residents, not everyone has benefited equally. During the transition, Nanaimo has experienced lower levels of personal income and higher rates of income assistance, poverty and unemployment than for the Province.

• **Centre for Learning:**

Nanaimo is becoming a major centre for learning, with Malaspina University-College as its nucleus. Recently, the Early Development Instrument was implemented and Success by Six was started; two educational initiatives targeting the 0 to 6 population. A Career Tech Centre and an Elder College were also established. Additionally, Nanaimo has an active International Student Education Program, which is attracting students from around the world.

• **Decreasing Funding and Increasing Demand for Services:**

Nanaimo’s non-profit agencies are facing increasing uncertainty. In a survey of 25 non-profit agencies serving children and families conducted in the fall of 2003, 40% reported a decrease in provincial government funding over the past year, while 76% reported an increase in demand for their services over the past year. Regarding the latter, the survey found that this increase in demand was partly due to cuts in both provincial income assistance and legal aid.

• **Increasing Use of Coalitions and Partnerships:**

Partly due to decreasing funding and increasing demand for services, Nanaimo is seeing more agencies and organizations using coalitions and partnerships to achieve common objectives. Examples include but are not limited to Food Link Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Alcohol and Drug Action Committee and Success by Six.
As part of the terms of reference for this study, it stated that “community consultation will be a key element underlying the strategy process.” It also stated that “the input gained through community consultation events will define a social vision for Nanaimo, goals to achieve that vision and strategies to achieve those goals.”

Based on the above directive, the steering committee, with the assistance of the consultant, designed a consultation process (see chart on page 5) which maximized opportunities for community involvement and input. A key component of the strategy process was the development of a discussion paper organized by age groupings – i.e., children and families; youth and young adults; adults; and seniors. This discussion paper facilitated input by and for the identified groups and was used as the basis for two community symposiums. The steering committee also reached out to those groups which traditionally do not get involved in community consultation processes, including the aboriginal community, the homeless, lone parents and street involved youth.

In total, about 500 people were consulted between November 19, 2003 and June 23, 2004. This consultation included but was not limited to the following:

- a community/service provider forum (50+ participants);
- two community symposiums to introduce the discussion paper (100+ participants);
- completion of the discussion paper (33 responses);
- an aboriginal focus group (35+ participants);
- a youth forum (20+ participants);
- two seniors focus groups (15+ participants);
- two lone/young parents focus groups (15+ participants);
- an alcohol and drug focus group (20+ participants);
- a senior management meeting (15+ participants);
- two community forums to discuss the draft strategy report (70+ participants);
- follow-up responses to the draft strategy report (23 responses);
- interviews with key informants (25+ interviewees);
- five steering committee meetings.

Please note that all of the above consultation events have been summarized and are available in a companion report.
Consultation participants emphasized the need to link social development with economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. It was noted that a high quality of life is dependent on improvements to all three interconnected components.

Participants frequently referred to the Economic Development Strategy’s “Circle of Prosperity.” It was noted that this organizing framework attempts to link all three components under one unifying vision and sets forth a detailed strategy to generate wealth for businesses and residents. This wealth, in turn, is used to support community amenities and social services which contribute to livability and quality of life.

While participants were generally complimentary of the above framework, some felt that it was too focused on the economic component and that it needed to make more explicit reference to the social and environmental components, as well as cultural, recreational and other considerations.

Based on the input received, a modified framework is proposed on page 6; one which incorporates three equally weighted and interconnected components.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Achieves a diversified and sustainable economy that generates wealth, which, in turn, provides income-earning opportunities for residents and supports community amenities and services.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Achieves a high quality of life by empowering citizens, facilitating capacity-building and involvement and making the community a healthy, inclusive and safe place in which to live, recreate and work.

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE / ENVIRONMENT

Celebrates and preserves the cultural, historical and natural heritage of Nanaimo, which contributes to the community’s unique sense of place, while maintaining links with the past and offering residents ready access to nature and recreation.

BENEFITS OF A STRONG ECONOMY, HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Attracts Business and Investment
Attracts a Skilled Workforce
Contributes to Community Pride and Spirit
Supports Downtown Revitalization
Encourages Inclusion
Facilitates Intergenerational Linkages and Social Interaction
Fosters Tourism
Protects Sensitive Ecosystems and Provides Essential Habitat for Wildlife
Retains Youth After Graduation
Others
Consultation participants emphasized the need for the strategy to build upon and relate to other planning processes, both past and present, in Nanaimo. It was noted that what all these processes have in common is a desire to improve livability and quality of life for all residents.

During the consultation, participants made frequent references to projects, reports and studies which they felt would assist the consultant in preparing the strategy. This information was collected, analyzed and used to inform the strategy. Where possible, it is cited or profiled as part of the six major areas of focus.

Participants also made frequent references to groups and organizations which they felt were doing good work in the areas of economic and social development. Again, this work was used to inform the strategy and it is cited or profiled as part of the six major areas of focus.

We have a tendency of wanting to keep reinventing the wheel. Instead of learning from past planning processes and building upon them; we usually start anew. This is frustrating for those people who contributed to those processes. There is much merit in looking back at where we came from and learning from our successes and failures, while continuing to move forward. (Community and Service Provider Forum Participant)

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<td>The following summary lists some of the highlighted initiatives in the strategy:</td>
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<td>• Aboriginal Education Program</td>
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<td>• Career Tech Centre</td>
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<td>• Early Development Instrument</td>
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<td>• International Student Education Program</td>
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<td>• Success by Six</td>
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<th>Employment and Income:</th>
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<td>• Central Island Human Resources Strategy</td>
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<td>• Economic Development Group</td>
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<th>Community and Health Services:</th>
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<td>• Fetal Alcohol Group</td>
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<td>• Food Link Nanaimo</td>
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<td>• Nanaimo Alcohol and Drug Action Committee</td>
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<td>• Youth Health Centre</td>
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<th>Housing and Shelter:</th>
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<td>• Building Capacity: A Housing Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>• Reducing Homelessness: A Community Plan for Nanaimo</td>
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<td>• Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Program</td>
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<th>Safety and Security:</th>
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<td>• Community Policing Stations</td>
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<td>• Safer City Initiative</td>
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<td>• SAFER Downtown Nanaimo Project</td>
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<td>• School Liaison Officer Program</td>
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<th>Community Life:</th>
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<td>• Harewood Family of Community Schools</td>
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<td>• Leisure Economic Access Program</td>
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<td>• Partners for an Inclusive Community Initiative</td>
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<td>• Safe Harbour Program</td>
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Proposed Vision Statement:

Based on the consultation, the vision statement below was developed. This statement takes into consideration the many calls by participants for the need to create a more caring society; one which is based on acceptance, compassion and shared responsibility. It also takes into consideration the many calls by participants for the need to empower and enable citizens to improve their quality of life and for the community to become more proactive in addressing its social issues.

Nanaimo will be known as a community which nurtures a caring, healthy, inclusive and safe environment and which empowers and enables its citizens to realize their aspirations and hopes. It will also be known as a leader in addressing social issues through its commitment to capacity building and partnering.

Proposed Goals:

Based on the consultation, the below six goals were developed. These goals correspond to the six major areas of focus: i.e., employment and income; education and learning; community and health services; housing and shelter; safety and security; and community life.

- To encourage and support the development of a wide range of educational and learning opportunities which meet the diverse needs of all members of the community.

- To facilitate the development of a strong, diversified and sustainable economy which provides employment and upgrading opportunities for all members of the community.

- To create a healthy community, which optimizes community and family support systems and individual capacities, by way of health promotion and a combination of early intervention, prevention, supportive and treatment services.

- To ensure an adequate supply of housing types, tenure arrangements and affordability levels, including emergency shelter, supportive and transitional housing, which addresses the diverse needs of all members of the community.

- To maximize the safety and security of all members of the community by preventing and reducing the opportunities for, as well as addressing the root causes of, accidents, criminal activity and violence.

- To develop an inclusive community which provides opportunities for active involvement; which welcomes the contributions of all members; which facilitates social and intergenerational interaction; and which recognizes and fosters respect for diversity.
Based on the consultation, the following five major themes emerged:

- **Asset-Based Development:**
  Recognize the positive potential of people – i.e., individuals, families and communities – and what can be accomplished by focusing on strengths. It was emphasized that there is a need to identify assets and strengths and to use them as the foundation for addressing the social issues facing Nanaimo.

- **Early Intervention and Prevention:**
  Recognize the importance of early intervention and prevention. It was emphasized that economic and social benefits can be realized by directing more resources to the early years, where developmental and educational gains are greatest, and by emphasizing prevention and remediation.

- **Root Causes:**
  Recognize the importance of addressing the root causes and not just treating the symptoms. It was emphasized that there is a need to focus on the underlying factors behind the social issues facing Nanaimo, including alienation, discrimination, homelessness, illiteracy, poverty, substance misuse and unemployment.

- **Inclusiveness:**
  Recognize the value of inclusion. It was emphasized that there is a need to recognize and address the diverse needs of all members of the community, including those people who are often overlooked such as the disabled, the homeless, lone parents, people with mental health or substance misuse issues and street involved youth.

- **Collaboration and Partnership:**
  Recognize the importance of collaboration and partnership. Given the complexity and interconnectedness of many of the social issues facing Nanaimo, it was emphasized that success will only be achieved by everyone working together.

Participants felt that these five major themes should guide the implementing body in its deliberations, including establishing priorities, directing funds and evaluating success.
The suggested strategies as outlined in each of the six major areas of focus are intended to achieve the proposed vision and goals. They were derived based on the input received from consultation participants and from a review of the background documentation.

Throughout the consultation process, participants were asked to contribute suggested strategies. Given the number of events and the number of participants, hundreds of suggested strategies were compiled. In some cases, the suggested strategies were very broad (e.g., create more opportunities for social interaction) or very detailed (e.g., install a new bus shelter at a particular stop along an existing bus route). Regarding the former, this input was used to develop and refine the goals. As for the latter, this input has been documented in a companion report and will be available to the implementing body and all task or working groups operating in the six major areas of focus.

In many cases, there was a convergence of opinion in support of a particular strategy (e.g., expand apprenticeship and work experience opportunities within the high school system). In other cases, key informants were consulted in the six major areas of focus to review and prioritize the suggested strategies.

Despite efforts to consolidate and reduce the number of suggested strategies, each of the six major areas of focus contains ten or more suggested strategies. As such, the implementing body will need to establish priorities and a timeframe for implementation (i.e., immediate, short, medium and longer-term) for each of the six major areas of focus. To this end, a proposed priority setting mechanism, along with suggested criteria, is attached in Appendix 2. Of importance, consultation participants stressed the need to immediately implement one or two high profile strategies in order to build awareness about the strategy and to generate both enthusiasm and momentum as the emphasis shifts from planning to action.

Profile

At the young mothers focus group, participants emphasized the importance of childcare, housing and public transit. It was noted that the lack of affordable childcare and the limited availability of public transit act as barriers both to gaining employment and to participating in all facets of community life. It was also noted that the lack of affordable housing contributes to overcrowding, poverty and stress. With regard to suggested strategies, participants called for the creation of more affordable, flexible licensed child care, especially for children under 24 months; the provision of late night bus service in all neighbourhoods; and the development of more non-profit, subsidized housing targeting lone parent families. Regarding the latter, they felt that such housing should be combined with childcare and incorporate market housing, thus reducing the stigma of living in social housing.

In order to move forward, we need to get the word out about the strategy. To this end, we need to hold a high profile event which captures the imagination of the community and facilitates awareness about the strategy and the social challenges facing Nanaimo. One such vehicle could be the suggested diversity or respect festival.

(Forum Participant)
The possible benchmarks as outlined in each of the six major areas of focus are intended to monitor and evaluate progress toward the achievement of the proposed vision and goals. They were derived primarily from the Social Status Report (May 2003), which was prepared in support of the strategy. In some cases, consultation participants suggested additional or alternate benchmarks.

The above report highlighted 50 benchmarks or indicators in ten areas, with six of the ten areas corresponding to the six major areas of focus in the strategy. Of note, benchmarks or indicators report on the status of larger systems. For example, the number and percentage of all renter households who paid 30% or more of their gross household income on rent provides valuable information about the housing situation in a community in particular and about the social wellbeing and economic health of that community in general. When a number of benchmarks or indicators are tracked over time, they can provide information on the direction a system is going – i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. They can also provide evidential information as to the success of planned interventions to improve social conditions.

The ability to monitor social conditions and to provide evidential information as to the success of planned interventions is thus dependent on the selection and tracking of good benchmarks or indicators. This raises the question: “What constitutes good benchmarks or indicators?” According to The Toronto Community Indicator Project (1999), good benchmarks or indicators:

- are easily measurable;
- are easily understood by all;
- are readily available;
- answer questions about the community that residents agree are important;
- help identify challenges or issues that the community can actually do something about;
- provide information about the community-as-a-whole but may also point out opportunities or challenges specific to a particular geographic area, interest or sector.

Given that the Social Status Report was prepared in May 2003, some of the benchmarks or indicators, especially those based on the Census, are up to nine years old. (It should be noted that while the most recent Census was conducted in 2001, some of the information was not publicly available until April 2004.) Where possible, efforts have been made to update all historical benchmark information in the strategy to either 2001 or 2002. It is proposed that the implementing body, as part of its ongoing work, continue to update the benchmarks every two years (if available) until 2010 or 2011 (depending on the source of the information). It is also proposed that the implementing body use this information to identify opportunities and challenges; to establish priorities; and to monitor and evaluate the success of planned interventions.
Based on the consultation, a number of possible areas of focus emerged. These areas included population groupings (e.g., people with disabilities, recent immigrants, seniors, etc.) and issue areas (e.g., education, employment, housing, etc.). With regard to the former, concern was expressed about labeling people and the steering committee made the decision not to use population groupings. As for the latter, over 20 possible issue areas were identified. Given the number, the steering committee decided to consolidate the possible issue areas into five or six major areas of focus. As such, some possible issue areas (e.g., childcare, literacy, public transit, etc.) are discussed under one or more of the six major areas of focus which organize the strategy.

It should be emphasized that the six major areas of focus deal with social aspects and considerations. For example, the area dealing with employment and income is primarily concerned with ensuring that all members of the community have the necessary education and skills and have an equal opportunity (based on those skills) to gain employment. It is not focused on generating employment and income per se. The latter area of focus falls under the mandate of the Economic Development Group and its Economic Development Strategy. As such, the strategy augments and complements existing initiatives and studies, while providing a social perspective.
Introduction:
Consultation participants referred to the importance of education and learning, especially given economic restructuring and technical innovation. It was noted that high school completion is now the minimum standard for entry into almost all areas of employment within the new economy and that post-secondary education and training has become increasingly important in ensuring steady employment. It was also noted that workers will need to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skills throughout their working years in order to maintain their employability within the new economy.

Assets and Strengths:
During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive initiatives related to education and learning. Cited initiatives included but were not limited to:

- the introduction of several new provincial educational initiatives targeting the 0 to 6 population, including the Early Development Instrument and Success by Six;
- the implementation of kindergarten speech and language screening by School District #68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith);
- the implementation of the Aboriginal Education Program by School District #68, which is making education more relevant to aboriginal students, while improving graduation rates;
- the increase in the Dogwood Completion Rate (see page 17) from 65% in 1996/97 to 79% in 2002/03 for School District #68;
- the important role played by Malaspina University-College, which offers certificate, diploma and degree granting programs in a variety of areas, including academic, applied, career, professional and technical, as well as a wide range of community education programs;
- the establishment of an International Student Education Program, which is attracting students from around the world;
- the establishment of the Career Tech Centre, which is a partnership between School District #68 and Malaspina University-College;
- the increase in choice with regard to educational opportunities - e.g., e-learning, home schooling, private schooling, etc.;
- the preparation of the Central Island Human Resources Strategy;
- the many literacy programs targeting the needs of children, youth and adult learners;
- the establishment of an Elder College, which targets the educational and learning needs of the growing number of seniors in Nanaimo.

Profile
Success by Six, which is being co-sponsored by the United Way, is a partnership which will support the development of community capacity around early childhood development. It seeks to give children ages 0 to 6 the foundation they need to get a good start in life. The model is predicated on the belief that all sectors of the community need to be involved and mobilized to support children in their early years.
Challenges:

As for challenges, participants stated that despite the recent increases in the Dogwood Completion Rate, about 20% of all students do not graduate from School District #68. For these students, it was noted, that many will find themselves trapped in cycles of unstable work and dependency, a situation which often leads to low self-esteem and poverty.

Participants cited a number of possible contributing factors as to why some students do not graduate, including the closure of the Teen Learning Centre, concerns about school safety, cuts to special education programs and student support services, increasing reliance on performance-based testing, lack of child psychologists, larger class sizes, etc. Participants also cited a number of possible contributing factors outside the school system, including concerns about poor parenting, high rates of mobility, high rates of teen pregnancy, increasing numbers of youth being diagnosed with mental illnesses, increasing rates of substance misuse, etc. In fact, in a recent review of student support services for School District #68 (April 2004), it was reported that growing numbers of students are coming to school with complex developmental and health needs, and behavioural, emotional and social challenges. As such, it was felt that any strategy to address this issue needed to take a collaborative, integrated approach, involving education, criminal justice, health and social service agencies, as well as parents and students.

With regard to students who do graduate from high school, it was noted that many do not go on to post-secondary studies. In fact, only 19.2% of high school graduates from School District #68 in 2001 immediately went on to post-secondary studies at Malaspina University-College in 2001/02. For those not transitioning to post-secondary studies, many entered directly into the job market, while others temporarily postponed their post-secondary plans or attended a college or university outside of Nanaimo. It was also noted that increasing tuition fees, combined with the elimination of grants to first year students, may contribute to even fewer high school graduates transitioning to post-secondary studies. Given the importance of post-secondary education and training to employability within the new economy, it was felt that more needed to be done to improve access.

Participants raised concerns about low levels of literacy, especially among adults, and access to Adult Basic Education and English-as-a-Second Language training. It was noted that people with low levels of education or literacy, or a poor command of the English language, are less likely to be employed and to have stable incomes. It was also noted that such people are often reluctant to seek assistance, given the stigma associated with being a high school drop-out or being illiterate. In fact, the Adult Education and Training Survey (1998) found that the lower a person’s educational level in British Columbia, the less likely he or she is to enroll in an adult education program. As for English-as-a-Second Language training, it was noted that most immigrants are adults; as such, they did not benefit or are not benefiting from English language training in the schools. In fact, Statistics Canada (2001) reported that 62% of immigrants to Nanaimo were 20 years or older at the time of immigration. For non-English speaking immigrants, especially those who try to learn English on their own or with the assistance of family and friends, many will experience difficulties accessing community services, achieving employment, enhancing education or skills and expanding support networks.

Profile

Between 2001/02 and 2003/04, student enrollment in Adult Basic Education at Malaspina University-College decreased by 19.5%. Contributing factors included financial challenges and scheduling difficulties.

(Adult Basic Education Enrollment Report, 2004)
Proposed Goal:

To encourage and support the development of a wide range of educational and learning opportunities which meet the diverse needs of all members of the community.

Suggested Strategies:

The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized this this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

Elementary and Secondary Education:

School District #68 has recently undertaken a review of its special education programs and student support services which may address many of the suggested strategies in these two areas.

• Complete and implement the Guide to Special Education Programs and Services, which is a reference tool to enhance the quality of programs and services to students with special needs.
• Establish more community schools and explore new financial partnerships to make them viable in the long term. Of note, such schools encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their child’s learning and social development.
• Include hearing screening as part of kindergarten speech and language screening.
• Place greater emphasis on early diagnosis and treatment for students with emotional disorders or mental illnesses. (The Ministry of Children and Family Development reported that mental illnesses are now the most important group of health problems that children and youth suffer.)
• Place greater emphasis on early diagnosis and intervention for students considered at-risk, both academically and behaviourally.
• Ensure adequate funding for special education programs and student support services, especially in light of increasing need.
• Ensure better continuity of programming for students who move from one school to another within School District #68.
• Review existing and consider new initiatives designed to address school bullying and harassment (in light of the fact that about a quarter of all students do not feel safe while at school).
• Work with key community and government agencies to develop an integrated service delivery approach to the provision of services to children and youth with special education needs.
• Work with the aboriginal community to continue to refine the Aboriginal Education Program and to increase graduation rates for aboriginal students.

Life long learning is becoming increasingly important, given the changes in the workplace and the emphasis being placed on personal development.

(Seniors Focus Group Participant)
Post-Secondary Education:

- Enhance bridging opportunities between high schools and post-secondary institutions by way of joint programming, mentoring, orientation sessions, site visits, etc.
- Improve information services regarding post-secondary education, including career or program options, eligibility criteria, financing, etc.
- Work with the business community and charitable and philanthropic organizations, as well as the various levels of government, to develop strategies to reduce post-secondary fees and to increase the number of bursaries and grants which are available.

Adult Basic Education and Continuing Studies:

- Ensure access to Adult Basic Education, by making sure that any fees are affordable and that financing is available to those in need, as well as by addressing other potential barriers to access, including child care, scheduling, transportation, etc.
- Improve access to English-as-Second Language training for adults and work with ethnic communities and multicultural agencies to increase participation in such programs.
- Increase support for early and adult literacy programs and promote volunteer opportunities related to mentoring and tutoring.

Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, the following five benchmarks were used to track conditions related to education and learning

- Percentage of the population (15+) with less than a Grade 9 education:

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<tr>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
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Dogwood Completion Rate

1. The Dogwood Completion Rate measures the percentage of Grade 8 students who graduate with a Dogwood Certificate within six years. It is not the inverse of the drop-out rate, as students may graduate after the six year period.

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<td>67.4%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
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Percentage of Grade 12 graduates from School District #68 who immediately enroll in career technology, university degree and university transfer courses at Malaspina University-College:

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<td>25.4%</td>
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Percentage of the population (15+) who have a trade certificate or diploma:

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<td>4.5%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
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Percentage of the population (15+) who have a bachelor degree or higher:

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<tr>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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Profile

In the spring of 2003, kindergarten teachers in School District #68 administered the Early Development Instrument to every kindergarten student. This instrument is a population based measure for communities to gauge school readiness of children at the kindergarten level. It can be used as a predictor of later school performance for groups of children. It can also be used as a first stage screen to identify children that may require special assessment and interventions.

Learning needs to be accessible to everyone. As such, we need to develop welcoming places where learning can take place. Community schools, with their emphasis on community education and programming and their use of community involvement, provide such a model. In order to address our future educational needs, we need to establish more community schools in Nanaimo.

(Discussion Paper Respondent)
Introduction:
Consultation participants made frequent references to the new economy in Nanaimo and to the shift from resource based industries to information, knowledge and service based industries. It was noted that while many initiatives have been undertaken in support of the new economy and to ease the period of adjustment; it was also noted that some people find themselves on the “outside looking in” – i.e., they are ill prepared or their skills are no longer required. As one participated stated, “these people should not be mothballed; instead they should be educated and trained to be an integral part of the new economy.”

Assets and Strengths:
During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive initiatives related to employment and income.

Based on the input received, participants cited the work of the Economic Development Group, which comprises a coalition of businesses, institutions and organizations working together to facilitate economic development. More specifically, participants referred to the Economic Development Strategy (May 2002) and to the Central Island Human Resources Strategy (March 2002), the latter of which identifies five economic drivers – i.e., advanced technological manufacturing, film and video, information technology, marine manufacturing, and oil and gas.

Participants also cited the important role played by Malaspina University-College. It was noted that this institution offers certificate, diploma and degree granting programs in a variety of areas, including academic, applied, career, professional and technical, as well as a wide range of community education programs. Participants felt that this institution is playing and will continue to play an important role in educating and training the workforce for the skill requirements of the new economy.

Challenges:
Participants referred to the high levels of income assistance and unemployment, especially among youth and older workers; the high rates of poverty, including child poverty; and the lower than provincial average personal income levels. In fact, BC Stats ranked the Nanaimo Local Health Area tenth out of 78 Local Health Areas (2003) on its Composite Index of Human Economic Hardship, which takes into account the percentage of the population 0-64 who are receiving income assistance continuously for less than and over one year and the percentage of the population 65+ receiving the maximum Guaranteed Income Supplement, among other factors. For aboriginal and immigrant members of society, it was noted that many experience these hardships, while facing others, including discrimination. It was also noted that long term dependency on income assistance and persistent unemployment, especially among youth, leads to despair and hopelessness, which contribute to crime, substance misuse, suicide, violence and other social issues.
With regard to some of the underlying factors contributing to the above ranking, it was noted that about 20% of students do not graduate from high school; and of those who do, most do not immediately go on to post-secondary studies at Malaspina University-College (see area entitled “education and learning”). It was also noted that the higher rates of teen pregnancy and the higher percentage of lone parent families in Nanaimo compared to the Province have implications for both employment and income. For teen mothers, many forego their education and have difficulty finding and retaining a job due to limited education and work experience, as well as childcare requirements. For lone parent families, especially female headed, many live in poverty, partially due to childcare barriers which limit their employability. In fact, female headed lone parent families in Nanaimo earned 47.5% of that earned by two parent families and 68.2% of that earned by male lone parent families in 2001.

Other cited underlying factors included but were not limited to: the lack of opportunities for high school students to gain relevant work experience; the limited number of career and employment counsellors in the high school system; the lack of flexible scheduling and job sharing opportunities for parents of young children; the lack of supportive employment opportunities for people with a disability; and the lack of early morning and late night transit service which makes it difficult for those people reliant on transit to work at jobs requiring such hours.

Proposed Goal:

To facilitate the development of a strong, diversified and sustainable economy which provides employment and upgrading opportunities for all members of the community.

Suggested Strategies:

The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized that this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

In general, these strategies primarily target those people who are ill prepared for or whose skills are no longer required under the new economy and they are categorized under the following three headings: employment readiness, employment entry and employment retention.
Employment Readiness:

- Improve access to career and employment counselling for high school students and ensure that counsellors are aware of the growth areas within the new economy and the skill requirements needed to work within them.
- Promote technical and trades occupations within the high school system and ensure that the curriculum is supportive of such occupations.
- Expand apprenticeship and work experience opportunities within the high school system to prepare students (not going on to post-secondary studies) for immediate employment.
- Promote volunteerism within the high school system to enable students to gain practical work experience and to learn good work habits and interpersonal skills.
- Expand education, training and work experience opportunities for out-of-school and street involved youth.
- Improve the employability of teen mothers by providing programs that meet their educational and training needs, as well as their childcare requirements.

Employment Entry:

- Establish a process involving employers, educators and trainers to increase labour force participation by and employment opportunities for aboriginal peoples, people with a disability, recent immigrants, street involved youth, etc.
- Expand supportive employment opportunities for people with a disability and publicly recognize employers who hire and train people with a disability.

Employment Retention:

- Expand education and training opportunities for displaced, older and returning workers and combine with coaching, counselling and mentoring.
- Develop a childcare strategy which supports a range of affordable, flexible and high quality childcare options, including casual, evening and weekend care.
- Work with employers around flexible scheduling and job sharing opportunities for parents of young children and caregivers to disabled, elderly and ill family members.
- Work with employers and transit providers around scheduling to enable those people reliant on transit to work at jobs requiring early morning or late night hours.

Discrimination directed toward aboriginal workers is a concern that needs to be addressed. Many employers are reluctant to hire aboriginal workers, as they believe that they have poor work habits. This stereotyping has to change or all the gains made in the areas of education and training will be for naught.

(Key Informant Interviewee)
Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, the following five benchmarks were used to track conditions related to employment and income:

- **Average personal income in Nanaimo:**

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<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>$35,154</td>
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- **Percentage of females (15+) who participated in the labour force in Nanaimo:**

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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
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- **Percentage of the population (19 to 64) who received provincial income assistance and federal employment insurance in Nanaimo:**

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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
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- **Percentage of economic families\(^1\) living below the low-income cut-offs in Nanaimo:**

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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
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- **Annual average unemployment rate for adults (15+) in the labour force in Nanaimo:**

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<tr>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
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1. Statistics Canada defines an economic family as two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.
Introduction:

Consultation participants emphasized the important role played by community and health services in promoting healthy lifestyles; supporting people with debilitating illnesses and disabilities; and addressing health and social issues such as inadequate nutrition, mental illness and substance misuse. It was noted that these services contribute to a high quality of life for all residents.

Assets and Strengths:

During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive initiatives related to community and health services. Based on the input received, participants cited the following initiatives:

- the development of a Youth Health Centre offering a variety of reproductive health services, including counselling related to healthy relationships and nutrition;
- the establishment of a Fetal Alcohol Group, which is working to reduce the incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome in Nanaimo;
- the establishment of Food Link Nanaimo;
- the improvement in mental health services, including the recent addition of two early psychosis beds in Nanaimo;
- the increased collaboration between the Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District #68 and the Vancouver Island Health Authority;
- the introduction of several new provincial initiatives targeting the 0 to 6 population, including the Early Development Instrument and Success by Six (see area entitled “education and learning”);
- the work of the Nanaimo Alcohol and Drug Action Committee, which is a coalition of about 25 community, government and non-government agencies concerned with the alcohol and drug problem in Nanaimo and committed to action that will reduce the harm.

Challenges:

Participants felt that too little attention was being focused on early diagnosis, intervention and prevention services. It was noted that it is far more cost effective to prevent potentially harmful behaviours than it is to treat them. It was also noted that current funding for community and health services is biased toward treatment and that the push toward greater accountability reinforces this bias. As one participant stated: “It is difficult to quantify early diagnosis, intervention and prevention services, since the benefits may not be realized for many years.” While progress has been made in this area, as evidenced by the Building Better Babies and CAPP Programs, it was felt that more needed to be done.
Participants expressed concern about the high incidence of mental illness and substance misuse and their impact on other social issues, including crime, domestic violence, homelessness, poverty and unemployment. It was noted that deinstitutionalization, without supportive housing in place, has contributed to homelessness and taxed community and health services. In fact, in a recent study, it was found that while the severely mentally ill account for 10 to 15 percent of the homeless population, they use about 60 percent of the services. As for substance misuse, it was noted that there is little community awareness of this issue and its impacts. This lack of awareness, it was felt, has contributed to the current lack of funding to build community capacity to deal with this issue. In fact, Clearview Detox Centre is unable to meet over 1,700 requests for assistance on an annual basis.

Participants also expressed concern about a number of other health related issues, including inadequate nutrition, especially among children and youth; high rates of depression and suicide; high rates of teen pregnancy; and increasing rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; among others. While it was noted that progress is being made in these and other areas, a number of participants felt that a more comprehensive approach is needed; one which targets the root causes, including alienation, discrimination, homelessness, illiteracy, poverty and unemployment. As such, there was support for community and health service providers to take a more holistic, integrated approach to health care. As one participant stated: “Treatment is only part of the solution and often fails if not combined with coping mechanisms, self-esteem counselling and support services.”

Many aboriginal people feel uncomfortable in clinical, structured environments. As such, we created a non-judgmental, welcoming environment in which to access health services. In fact, about 27,000 people a year access the health centre at Tillicum Haus.

Of a more specific nature, many participants made reference to Nanaimo’s aging population and its potential impacts on community and health services. In fact, the percentage of the population 65+ and 80+ will more than double in the next 25 years. As such, it was noted that housing which enables the elderly to age in place and home support and other services to assist them to live independently will become increasingly important. For those seniors who can no longer live independently, it was noted that assisted living arrangements and caregiver supports such as respite will also become increasingly important. Some participants expressed concern that this shift in population will divert attention and dollars away from other segments of the population, including children, youth and adults. As such, it was felt that additional funding will be needed or efficiencies found to maintain current health care levels, given that demand will increase as the population ages.

Regarding funding, it was noted that many community service providers are facing increasing uncertainty and some are in jeopardy of closing or downsizing their operations. It was also noted that there is increasing demand for services and that those accessing services have increasingly complex needs. In fact, in a survey of non-profit service providers to children and families in Nanaimo, 38% reported eliminating programs and services and 76% reported increasing staff workloads. Additionally, it was noted that decreasing funding is contributing to increased competition and reduced collaboration. Given these realities, it was felt that community and health services may suffer.2

Proposed Goal:

To create a healthy community, which optimizes community and family support systems and individual capacities, by way of health promotion and a combination of early intervention, prevention, supportive and treatment services.

Suggested Strategies:

The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized this this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

General:

- Address the root causes underlying many of the health issues facing Nanaimo, including alienation, discrimination, homelessness, illiteracy, inadequate nutrition, poverty, unemployment, etc.
- Lobby the provincial government for an adequately funded community and health services sector.
- Establish primary health care centres in Nanaimo. These centres employ an integrated approach to primary and community health service delivery; offer a single point of entry; and are neighbourhood based.
- Frame substance misuse as a public health (and not a criminal justice) issue and emphasize prevention, early diagnosis and intervention.
- Improve access to general practitioners.
- Provide more respite care options and supports to caregivers to maintain their health, thus enabling them to continue to care for disabled, elderly or sick family members.
- In partnership with aboriginal, cultural and ethnic service providers, provide culturally sensitive health information, programs and services.

Profile

Community consultation participants made frequent references to the primary health care centre being developed in Ladysmith and scheduled to open in 2005.

This centre, which is based on the adjacent service delivery model, will facilitate access to the right service from the right care provider, thereby enabling health care professionals to focus on meeting people’s most important needs. It will emphasize prevention and promotion, as well as diagnosis and early intervention. While it will still offer chronic disease management and treatment, it will primarily work to prevent or delay the onset of chronic diseases.
Children and Youth:

- Enhance early diagnosis, intervention and prevention programs and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Continue to address the nutritional needs of children and youth through such means as Food Link Nanaimo and the School Meals Program.
- Develop a Pediatric Short Stay Clinic.
- Enhance community and family capacity to promote mental wellness and manage mental illnesses.
- Encourage and support fathers to take a more active role in their child’s health and social development.
- Enhance school and home-based clinical health outreach services.
- Improve the coordination and integration of acute, community and medical care services.
- Place greater emphasis on transition services between childhood and adolescence and between adolescence and adulthood in order to ensure continuity of programming and services.

Adults:

- Establish a mobile alcohol and drug intervention team to connect with, diagnose and refer people not currently accessing the health care system.
- Provide more residential treatment and supportive recovery beds, especially for women.
- Provide special detox and rehabilitation services for those who are dually diagnosed.
- Provide supportive housing for people living with HIV/AIDS, recovering from substance misuse or suffering from severe mental illnesses.
- Provide tertiary psychiatric services (to compensate for the downsizing of Riverview Hospital) and consider establishing a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (to care for the most severely mentally ill).

Seniors:

- Enhance diagnosis, education, counselling and treatment services for seniors, especially with regard to the use of alcohol and prescription drugs.
- Improve access to adult day care programs and long term care beds (thus freeing up acute care beds while awaiting placement).
- Increase support for community care nursing and home support services to enable seniors to live independently in their own homes and neighbourhoods.
Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, the following five benchmarks were used to track conditions related to community and health services:

- Number of pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19 years for the Nanaimo Local Health Area (LHA):

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- Percentage of all live births having low birth weight for the Nanaimo LHA:

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<td>4.4</td>
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- Number of alcohol-related deaths per 10,000 population in the Nanaimo LHA:

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<td>3.47</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>6.81</td>
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- Number of illicit drug deaths per 100,000 population for the Central Vancouver Island Health Region:

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<td>8.31</td>
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- Number of suicides per 10,000 population in the Nanaimo LHA:

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<td>1.24</td>
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3. At the time of publication, this data was not available for 2002.
Introduction:

Consultation participants referred to the important role that housing plays in the health of the community. It was noted that housing is essential to survival and that affordable, safe and sustainable housing is the basis for building stable lives and neighbourhoods. One participant stated that obtaining non-profit, subsidized housing provided her with the stability needed to forge friendships and the discretionary income necessary for her and her family to participate in all facets of community life.

Assets and Strengths:

During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive initiatives related to housing and shelter. Based on the input received, participants frequently referenced the following studies:

- **Building Capacity: A Housing Needs Assessment** (1999);
- **Population and Housing Projections for the Regional District and City of Nanaimo, 2001 to 2031** (August 2002);

While it was felt that these studies had fully documented housing and shelter needs and outlined plans to address them, it was also felt that more needed to be done around implementation, especially with regard to facilitating affordable housing.

Participants were complementary of non-profit housing societies who provide subsidized housing to low-income families, people with a disability and seniors in Nanaimo. (In fact, there were 10 non-profit housing societies and 31 non-profit housing projects with 738 units in December 2002.) It was felt that this housing had a positive influence on reducing poverty and associated hardships for those accessing it, while helping to address the homelessness situation in Nanaimo. It was also felt that if the senior levels of government were to recommit to supporting non-profit housing, then Nanaimo would be well positioned, given its large and active non-profit housing sector.

Profile

The M’Akola Housing Society provides affordable rental housing for families and single parents of aboriginal ancestry who are in core housing need. Currently, its projects include over 500 units of affordable rental housing on Vancouver Island.

My child has Down Syndrome and I am concerned about the lack of housing targeting people with a disability. I want her to live independently but this will only be possible if affordable, supportive housing is available.

(Young Parents Focus Group Participant)
Challenges:

Participants referred to the withdrawal of the federal government from funding new non-profit housing in 1994 and the more recent shift by the provincial government from funding non-profit housing targeting all ages to funding assisted living units targeting the frail elderly. Participants also referred to the significant reduction in new apartments and row houses built specifically for rental purposes and the aging of the existing rental housing stock and its replacement by condominiums and other forms of development. Additionally, participants expressed concern about cuts in shelter and support payments under income assistance, which, they felt, would make it more difficult for recipients to secure adequate housing.

Given the above challenges, participants stated that it is not surprising that over half of renter households are experiencing housing affordability problems in Nanaimo (i.e., they pay over 30% or more of their gross annual income on rent). At the community symposium on February 18, 2004, a group of people with an intellectual disability stated that they all spent between 50% and 70% of their (gross annual) income on rent, which resulted in them having to make difficult choices about how to use their remaining income. Participants also expressed concern about long waitlists for non-profit housing and increasing reliance on less stable forms of housing such as secondary suites. Regarding the former, the above housing needs assessment reported that there were about 300 people on the waitlist for non-profit housing and that the average wait time ranged from three to twenty-four months. As for the latter, the City of Nanaimo estimates that there are between 3,000 and 4,000 ‘illegal’ secondary suites in Nanaimo.

Participants made frequent references to the homelessness situation in Nanaimo. Several participants referred to the community plan to address homelessness, noting that it estimated the visible street population at between 25 and 75 and that it emphasized that the greater concern was relative homelessness. Regarding the former, it was noted that emergency shelter usage is increasing. (In fact, between 1997/98 and 2001/02, the total number of clients using Samaritan House increased by 24.3% from 922 to 1,146; while the total number of bed nights increased by 54.1% from 3,193 to 4,922.) As for relative homelessness, it was noted that “many individuals and families are only one paycheque or support payment away from being homeless and that economic shifts and government policy changes could result in increasing numbers of people who are homeless.” Participants also expressed concern about youth homelessness, noting that many couch surf and some live with unrelated adults who may be taking advantage of them.

Besides affordability and homelessness, participants raised concerns about the current housing stock, stating that it did not address the needs of specific groups. It was noted that there is a shortage of bachelor and one-bedroom rental units in close proximity to transit and other amenities. As a result, it was felt that this shortage results in many youth and young adults sharing accommodation (often in overcrowded conditions) or living in substandard housing. It was also noted that Nanaimo has an aging population and that there is a lack of housing suitable for ‘empty nesters’ (i.e., older couples whose children have left home) and the frail elderly. Regarding the latter, it was stated that this group requires adaptable housing with supports that enable them to age in place and remain in their neighbourhoods. This type of housing was also seen as being important to people with a disability.

The lack of affordable, stable rental housing contributes to transience. For children who frequently move and who change schools, many will experience long-term, negative effects.

(Discussion Paper Respondent)
Proposed Goal:
To ensure an adequate supply of different housing types, tenure arrangements and affordability levels, as well as emergency shelter, supportive and transitional housing, which addresses the diverse needs of all members of the community.

Suggested Strategies:
The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized this this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

- Hold an annual forum to raise awareness about and to seek solutions to the affordable rental housing and homelessness situation in Nanaimo.
- Lobby the provincial government to review its income assistance program to ensure that the shelter portion of this program reflects the actual market rent range of rental housing.
- Lobby the senior levels of government to restore funding for new non-profit housing targeting low-income families, people with a disability, seniors and single adults.
- Assist non-profit housing societies to access funding and resources in order to adequately manage and maintain their current housing projects.
- Designate rooming houses and secondary suites as permitted uses within the City of Nanaimo’s Zoning Bylaw.
- Monitor and report on the affordable rental housing stock and take steps to both preserve and enhance it.
- Establish an Affordable Housing Fund to support the non-profit sector to leverage additional funds to build new non-profit housing targeting people in core housing need.
- Develop aging in place guidelines and incorporate them into the City of Nanaimo’s Zoning Bylaw.
- Examine and consider providing incentives which result in the feasibility of adaptable housing.
- Inform disabled, low-income and senior homeowners about and assist them to access the different housing programs available to them to adapt, modify and/or rehabilitate their homes.
- Encourage the development of affordable, supportive seniors housing that provides for care, nutrition, safety, socialization and transition.
- Seek consensus, partnerships and sustainable funding to address the priority areas as outlined in the community plan to address homelessness. This plan advocates for the development of a continuum of housing, income and support to assist people who are homeless to move out of the cycle of homelessness and to prevent those at-risk from becoming homeless.
Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, four of the following five benchmarks were used to track conditions related to housing and shelter:

- **Percentage of renter households who paid 30% or more of their gross household income on rent in Nanaimo:**
  
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
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- **Market rental apartment and row house vacancy rate in Nanaimo:**
  
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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- **Non-market housing as a percentage of the total rental housing supply in Nanaimo:**
  
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
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- **Number of turnaways at emergency shelters and transition houses in Nanaimo:**
  
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

- **Percentage of the population who changed their place in residence in Nanaimo:**
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>86/91</th>
<th>91/96</th>
<th>96/01</th>
<th>01/06</th>
<th>06/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

1. Given inconsistencies between the data collected by Statistics Canada in 1991 and that collected in 1996 and 2001, the former data is not included.

2. Historical information as to the number of non-profit housing units by year is not readily available.

3. As part of the Social Status Report, the number of clients and bed nights were tracked. Based on the input received during the community consultation process, it was suggested that a more appropriate benchmark as to need is the number of turnaways.
Introduction:

Consultation participants made frequent references to safety and security. It was noted that if residents feel safe and secure, then they are more likely to participate in all facets of community life. It was also noted that if a community has a reputation as being a safe and secure place, then tourists are more likely to visit and to stay for longer periods of time, thus contributing to economic growth and prosperity.

Assets and Strengths:

During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive initiatives related to safety and security. Cited initiatives included but were not limited to the following:

- the establishment of community policing stations and community crime prevention programs such as Block Parents, Citizens on Patrol, Crime Free Multi-Housing and Neighbourhood Watch;
- the establishment of the School Liaison Officer Program;
- the implementation of a safety audit as part of the SAFER Downtown Nanaimo Project;
- the participation in the Anti-Organized Crime Needs Assessment and Consultation Project, sponsored by the People’s Law School, which assessed the level of awareness about organized crime and its impacts;
- the participation in the Safer City Initiative, sponsored by ICBC, which will make recommendations to improve safety for all modes of transport.

Challenges:

Participants stated that not all community members feel equally safe or secure. It was noted that women and seniors are two groups which frequently express concerns about their safety, especially at night. In fact, the above safety audit cites research which reports that women are eight times more likely than men to forego an evening activity due to concerns for their safety. With regard to seniors, reference was made to studies which show that victimization rates decrease significantly with age, while levels of fear of crime increase significantly with age. Elementary and secondary school students also expressed concern about their safety, with 22% of elementary and 23% secondary students reporting that they do not feel safe while at school in School District #68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith). It was emphasized that this fear, whether real or perceived, needs to be acknowledged and addressed.

Participants stated that while most people fear crime perpetrated by strangers, most victims, especially of violent crime, know the perpetrator. It was noted that child abuse, date rape and domestic violence have become all too common. In fact, the above safety audit cites research which reports that one in three women is assaulted by her husband or partner in British Columbia. For children and youth who experience abuse or who witness violence, it was noted that the long term costs are significant. In its report entitled Family Violence in Canada (1999), Statistics Canada reports that children who witness violence are far more likely to develop aggressive behaviours, experience emotional difficulties, drop-out of school and engage in criminal activity.3 Participants emphasized that more needed to be done to protect women and children and to support families, while addressing the root causes contributing to family dysfunction and violence, including mental illness, poverty, substance misuse and unemployment.

The drug and sex trade, and its association with organized crime, was also cited. It was noted that drug dealers are actively targeting youth, both in and out of school; and that crystal meth and other illegal drugs are readily available in most neighbourhoods. Regarding the sex trade, it was noted that more women and youth are working the streets. In fact, the RCMP estimate that there are over 150 women in the sex trade in Nanaimo. Given these two activities, concern was expressed about crime and fear of crime, homelessness, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, violence and revitalization efforts in the downtown. Some participants also stated that the community is in denial with regard to the presence of organized crime, mistakenly believing that if they do not acknowledge it, “it may simply go away or stay in the shadows.”

Participants expressed concern about safety and security issues in the downtown, especially at night and in areas with high concentrations of liquor establishments. Again, women and seniors felt most at-risk, with some avoiding the downtown altogether. In fact, a telephone survey of Nanaimo residents, conducted in support of the safety audit, found that the primary deterrent to visiting downtown was the possibility of encountering open alcohol and drug use.4 Participants were complimentary of the many initiatives to improve safety and security in the downtown, as well as to revitalize it; however, some felt that more could be done to address the needs of exploited women and youth and to encourage living downtown, thus increasing the “number of eyes on the street.” Regarding the former, it was noted that there is a lack of emergency shelter beds for the homeless, safe house beds for street involved youth and transitional housing for women in the sex trade.


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Profile
The School Liaison Officer Program has six full-time school liaison officers; one for each high school in Nanaimo. Each officer has an office in the high school and is equipped with a cell phone and a pager. The officer’s first priority is to address school safety, then prevention and education.

Drug dealing is commonplace in the downtown and many dealers are actively targeting youth to increase their customer base. In fact, crystal meth is easier to obtain than smokes.

(Youth Forum Participant)
Participants expressed concern about the lack of proactive safety planning, especially as it relates to the frail elderly and people with a disability. It was noted that traffic calming measures (e.g., curb extensions, street narrowing, traffic islands, etc.) needed to be a key component in all neighbourhood planning. Additionally, it was noted that all public and private buildings and spaces needed to be accessible. One participant stated that while decorative pavers are ornate, they are particularly hazardous to elderly members of society with limited vision (as they are more prone to fall on uneven surfaces). Another participant stated that design professionals seldom consult with or involve less mobile members of society in their design planning.

Proposed Goal:

To maximize the safety and security of all community members by preventing and reducing the opportunities for, as well as addressing the root causes of, accidents, criminal activity and violence.

Suggested Strategies:

The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized that this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

- Continue to support the implementation of the Downtown Plan, which will increase the number of people living and working in the downtown and increase activity in the downtown by positioning it as a centre for arts and cultural activities.
- Implement the recommendations to improve safety in the downtown as outlined in the SAFER Downtown Nanaimo Project report; and consider if they should be applied on a community-wide basis.
- Participate in the Safer City Initiative, sponsored by ICBC, and consider implementing any recommendations related to pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- Restore (and increase) funding for programs which address violence against women and children and which support families in crisis.
- Increase funding for community crime prevention programs and neighbourhood policing initiatives, including foot and bicycle patrols in selected areas.
- Designate a police officer or officers to address issues related to the sex trade, especially with regard to youth and young adults.
- Facilitate the development of safe house beds targeting homeless and street involved youth and transitional housing targeting women in the sex trade.
- Review existing and consider new initiatives designed to address school bullying and harassment (in light of the fact that about a quarter of all students do not feel safe while at school).
• Support the establishment of safe zones around schools. These zones would be 500 metres in radius and police would take a no tolerance approach to bullying, drugs and other potentially harmful activities.

• Hold consultations involving women and seniors around crime and fear of crime and develop specific strategies to address their concerns and alleviate their fears.

• Improve pedestrian safety through the use of audible signals and traffic calming techniques such as curb extensions, street narrowing and traffic islands.

• Work with design professionals to ensure full accessibility in the built environment. Initiatives could include walkabouts with the frail elderly and people with a disability to learn from their experiences and perspectives.

Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, the following three benchmarks were used to track conditions related to safety and security:

• Number of Criminal Code offences reported per 1,000 persons in Nanaimo:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>158</td>
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• Number of youths charged with Criminal Code offences in Nanaimo:

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>445</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>-</td>
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• Number of block parents in Nanaimo:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>-</td>
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5. Prior to October 2002, participation in crime prevention programs was not tracked on a consistent basis. As such, this month will serve as the benchmark for the collection of future information.
Introduction:

Consultation participants raised a number of attributes related to community life, including the need to facilitate civic and community involvement; the need to foster a sense of belonging and neighbourliness; and the need to promote inclusiveness. They also cited the need to support inter-generational linkages, relationships and respect. As one participant stated, these attributes “are the glue that hold a community together.” These attributes, referred to as social capital by Robert Putnam in his ‘Social Capital Theory,’ are also catalysts for economic growth and prosperity.

Assets and Strengths:

During the consultation, participants were asked to identify positive examples related to community life. Cited examples included but were not limited to:

- the long history of volunteerism and the many community service agencies operating in Nanaimo;
- the City of Nanaimo’s Leisure Economic Access Program, which provides discounted course fees and free access to recreational programs for eligible children and youth under 19, and subsidized access for eligible adults;
- the Harewood Family of Community Schools, which facilitates community access to school facilities outside of regular school hours and provides a variety of community-based programs;
- the Partners for an Inclusive Community Initiative, which is building a community-wide commitment to creating a healthy, safe and secure community which is both inclusive and welcoming;
- the public’s use of the central waterfront, the design of which facilitates active participation and social interaction.

Challenges:

Participants referred to the lack of affordable childcare which inhibits participation by low income and lone parent families; the limited opportunities for youth to get involved or to socialize in a safe and supervised environment; the lack of culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of aboriginal peoples and recent immigrants; and the lack of outreach services targeting isolated seniors; among others. Participants also referred to the trend toward increasing age segregation with regard to educational offerings, living arrangements, recreational programs and social clubs.
Design and transportation challenges were frequently cited. Participants stated that newer single family residential neighbourhoods, especially in the north, are not designed to facilitate a sense of belonging and neighbourliness. As evidence, it was noted that residents often access their homes via their carports; drive their children to school; mingle in their backyards; and recreate, shop and work outside their immediate neighbourhood. It was also noted that most schools sit idle during evenings and on weekends, as well as during summers, meaning that residents cannot make use of these facilities and their considerable resources.

With regard to transportation, participants commented that those without access to private transport have difficulty maintaining social contacts. It was noted that HandiDART, which serves the frail elderly and people with a disability, gives priority to day programs and medical appointments as opposed to social visits. It was also noted that the bus system offers limited late night service, which inhibits participation and socialization by youth, while placing some at risk who accept rides with intoxicated friends or strangers. Additionally, participants raised concerns about the cost of public transit noting that for those people with fixed or low incomes, it is a limiting factor to participation.

**Proposed Goal:**

To develop an inclusive community which provides opportunities for active involvement; which welcomes the contributions of all members; which facilitates social and intergenerational interaction; and which recognizes and fosters respect for diversity.

**Suggested Strategies:**

The suggested strategies are supportive of the above goal and the larger social vision for Nanaimo. They are based on the input received during the community consultation process and from a review of previous research and studies. As such, they represent what participants felt were important at the time of consultation. Given their number, it is recognized that the implementing body will need to establish priorities. It is also recognized this this body will need to identify resource requirements and work with its partners in assigning responsibility.

- Develop a municipal consultation policy manual which describes how input will be achieved, how it will be used, how it will be communicated back and how it will influence decision-making.
- Develop new ways to involve youth in municipal decision-making processes (e.g., advisory councils, forums, etc.).
- Incorporate social impacts into the assessment process for all municipal development proposals to ensure livability, pedestrian orientation, public safety and social interaction.
- Implement a media campaign to identify the friendliest neighbourhoods and places in Nanaimo and explore how these findings can influence future planning, design and development.
• Promote the development of non-profit and private multi-family housing which facilitates social interaction and intergenerational living.

• Improve access to and availability of information regarding community services and volunteer opportunities. This information should be available in different languages, target different audiences and use a variety of media.

• Increase community access to public and school facilities and ensure that they are available at affordable rates.

• Locate new child care centres, public schools and senior serving facilities in close proximity to each other and promote joint programming and volunteer opportunities.

• Improve outreach to isolated, disadvantaged and/or marginalized members of the community, including people who are homeless, people with a disability, people with mental health and substance misuse issues, recent immigrants, seniors, street involved youth, etc.

• Conduct a research project into the factors which may inhibit participation in community, leisure and recreational programs (e.g., availability and cost of childcare, program fees, public transit scheduling, etc.) and seek solutions to them.

• Host a respect festival to recognize and celebrate diversity in its many forms. This festival should try to bridge cultural and intergenerational gaps by building respect, trust and understanding.

Possible Benchmarks:

Benchmarks, as applied here, will be used to monitor progress toward the identified goal. In themselves, they do not change the social conditions that they profile; that requires planned interventions. However, when a number of benchmarks are tracked over time, they can provide directional information regarding social conditions - i.e., getting better or worse or staying the same. This information can be used to identify needs and to develop new or reevaluate existing interventions.

As part of the Social Status Report, the following three benchmarks were used to track conditions related to community life:

• Number of volunteers registered with Volunteer Nanaimo:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>719</td>
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• Percentage of taxfilers who made a charitable donation in Nanaimo:

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<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
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• Percentage of all eligible voters who voted in municipal elections in Nanaimo:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
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</table>
Introduction:

Both the steering committee and consultation participants emphasized the importance of having a structure in place to coordinate and facilitate strategy implementation. Based on the input received, it was felt that the preferred option should meet the following criteria:

- facilitate immediate action and change;
- contribute to the coordination and integration of services;
- encourage input from different interests and sectors;
- engender respect within the community;
- facilitate senior management support and involvement;
- receive the support of funding organizations;
- integrate the social, economic and environmental components;
- ensure regular monitoring and reporting as to progress;
- facilitate organizational sustainability and accountability.

Possible Structures:

In order to coordinate and facilitate strategy implementation, the steering committee reviewed the following four possible structures. At the community forums on June 23, 2004, participants were asked to review the possible structures and to recommend a preferred option. To facilitate discussion, the key characteristics of each structure were highlighted, as were some of the advantages and disadvantages of each structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Structures</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with current steering committee</td>
<td>Designated staff and volunteers from various community, economic and social service agencies and groups.</td>
<td>Knowledgeable and committed members, many of whom have been involved from the beginning.</td>
<td>Sub-committee of the City of Nanaimo's Social Planning Advisory Committee, with no authority or resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Social Development Group</td>
<td>Has an executive and a broad range of interests at the table. Holds regular meetings and encourages active participation and coordination.</td>
<td>Can be established immediately and is highly flexible. It is also familiar, as it would be similar to the Economic Development Group.</td>
<td>Volunteer driven and it may or may not have senior management at the table.</td>
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### Possible Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Structures</th>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Social Planning Council</td>
<td>Non-profit organization with a Board of Directors and a membership.</td>
<td>Dedicated structure to facilitate social planning and coordination of services. Ability to advocate and to raise funds, either by donation or through fundraising.</td>
<td>Difficulty in raising funds, given the number of other causes. Can become politicized. Mixed results as to success throughout the Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a Multi-Partnership Arrangement</td>
<td>Based on formal written agreements or memorandums of understanding with all involved partners.</td>
<td>Increased commitment to implementation and often includes senior management at the table.</td>
<td>Requires significant time to put in place partnership arrangements. Can be selective with regard to partners.</td>
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### Preferred Option:

Forum participants emphasized the need for the current steering committee to continue in its role until another structure is in place. In the interim, it was felt that the steering committee should act as a champion for the strategy, increasing awareness about it and advocating on behalf of its implementation. It was also felt that one or more of the steering committee members should form part of the new structure in order to provide for continuity.

With regard to a preferred option, participants suggested a combination of the second and fourth possible structures – i.e., the establishment of a Social Development Group, with an executive and larger membership, and the use of formal written agreements or memorandums of understanding between all involved partners. It was felt that such a structure would:

- be familiar (given that it is modeled on the Economic Development Group);
- be supportable by all involved partners (given its apolitical nature);
- be action-oriented (given its executive) and representative (given its larger membership);
- have the resources required to implement the suggested strategies (given its use of agreements or memorandums of understanding).

On the latter point, some participants felt that formalizing arrangements would take time and could prove challenging.
Proposed Terms of Reference:

Based on the input received and the terms of reference for the Economic Development Group, the following terms of reference are proposed for the Social Development Group:

Mandate:

The Social Development Group will be a coalition of government, institutional, non-profit and private organizations, as well as concerned citizens, committed to working together to facilitate social development in general and to implement the strategy in particular.

Membership:

The Social Development Group will be comprised of an executive and a larger membership. It is proposed that the executive include representation from all major stakeholder groups, including the City of Nanaimo, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Malaspina University-College, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Human Resources, the Nanaimo Port Authority, the RCMP, School District #68 and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, as well as business interests and non-profit agencies. With regard to the membership, it is proposed that it be open to anyone with an interest in the social development of Nanaimo.

Executive Responsibilities:

The executive will be responsible for the following tasks:

- coordinating the implementation of the strategy;
- establishing priorities and directing task or working groups;
- raising awareness about the social issues facing Nanaimo;
- ensuring the health of the coalition and recruiting other partners, as necessary;
- managing the acquisition and expenditure of financial resources;
- overseeing communication and responding to requests for information;
- maintaining communication and organizing meetings with the larger membership;
- monitoring identified benchmarks and reporting on progress;
- updating the strategy.

Structure:

It is proposed that the executive meet at least once every two months and that the larger membership meet at least three times per year. It is also proposed that task or working groups be established on an as needed basis. If no coalition or group exists or is active in the six major areas profiled in the strategy (e.g., safety and security), then it is proposed that a task or working group be established.
Staffing:

It is proposed that the City of Nanaimo’s Social Planner assist the executive in implementing the strategy. It is also proposed that partner groups authorize staff to sit on task and working groups and assign staff to work toward the implementation of specific strategies related to their mandate.

Funding:

It is proposed that partner organizations contribute resources (i.e., funding and in-kind contributions) to ensure the sustainability of the Social Development Group and to implement the strategy. It is also proposed that consideration be given to establishing a non-profit society in order to receive funding.

Linkages:

It is proposed that the Social Development Group have a formalized relationship with the Economic Development Group. This relationship could include an exchange of members, joint strategies and regular updates. Formalized relationships should also be considered with other coalitions or umbrella organizations whose mandate impacts or includes social development.
As part of the terms of reference for this study, it stated that ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation will be key elements of the strategy.

Regarding monitoring, the possible benchmarks as outlined in each of the six major areas of focus will be used to monitor progress toward the achievement of the proposed vision and goals. They will also be used to provide evidential information as to the success of the planned interventions.

It is proposed that the implementing body collect benchmark information every two years (if available) up until 2010 or 2011 (depending on the source of the information). It is also proposed that the implementing body periodically meet to discuss trend information. For example, are there more or less renter households experiencing housing affordability problems. If the answer is more, then this may mean that additional resources need to be directed to this area. If the answer is less, then this may mean that the planned interventions are having their intended effect. In addition to monitoring progress and evaluating planned interventions, benchmark information can be used to build awareness about the social issues facing Nanaimo and to identify new and refine existing priorities.

As for evaluation, it is proposed that the implementing body conduct a formal evaluation of the strategy every three years. Such an evaluation will ensure that the strategy remains current and responsive. At a minimum, it is proposed that the implementing body consult with all partner agencies and member organizations as to the effectiveness of the strategy. As part of the consultation, participants could be asked to discuss the following questions:

- How did the strategy assist you or your organization?
- What information was most helpful to you or your organization?
- What information was missing or underreported?
- Why was the strategy successful or unsuccessful in addressing the social challenges facing Nanaimo?
- Are there other benchmarks that need to be collected?
- Is the existing implementing body inclusive of all interests and is it the best vehicle for implementing the strategy? If not, what other models should be considered?
- Who needs to be involved in preparing a new strategy or updating the existing one?

Based on the results of the evaluation process, the implementing body should revise and update the strategy to reflect the input received.
Social Development Strategy Steering Committee:

The Social Development Strategy Steering Committee is comprised of the following members:

- Lee Mason, Chair, The United Way of Nanaimo and District
- Joanne Blackman, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society
- Micheline Cawley, School District #68
- Sandra Good, Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Eileen Hooyberg, Social Planning Advisory Committee
- Beryl Mason, Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Valerie Massy, Child Development Centre
- Carol Matthews, Nanaimo Port Authority
- Alison Millward, City of Nanaimo
- Jerry Pink, Economic Development Group
- Bill Preston, School District #68
- Laurelle Street, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Carolyn Tatton, Economic Development Group
- Christina Thomas, Regional District of Nanaimo
- Ross White, Rotary International
- Anne Williams, Vancouver Island Health Authority

Contact Information:

For more information about the strategy, contact either:

Alison Millward, Social Planner, City of Nanaimo, (250) 755-4483 or Lee Mason, The United Way of Nanaimo and District, (250) 729-7400.
**Proposed Priority Setting Mechanism:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Strategies</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Urgency</th>
<th>Achievability</th>
<th>Control or Influence</th>
<th>Available Resources</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timeframe (I, S, M, L)</th>
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Review the list of suggested strategies for each of the six major areas of focus. For each of the above proposed criteria, assign a number from “1” to “3” with “1” being low, “2” being average or medium and “3” being high. After doing this for each of the suggested strategies, tabulate the score for each strategy and record it in the “total” box. The total score will assist the implementing body in establishing its priorities.

With regard to the “importance” box, the implementing body should discuss and determine each strategy’s compatibility with the five major themes (i.e., builds on existing assets and strengths, fosters early intervention and prevention, addresses root causes, promotes inclusion and facilitates partnering).

After establishing its priorities, the implementing body will need to discuss the timeframe for implementation. Using the “timeframe” box, it will discuss and determine if the priority should be implemented immediately or in the short, medium or longer term. The implementing body will need to determine what is meant by each of the four classifications.