

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Nanaimo “Official Community Plan Bylaw 2008 No. 6500” (planNanaimo), was adopted in September 2008. Goal Seven of the Official Community Plan (OCP) identifies neighbourhood and area plans as key tools in achieving the objectives of planNanaimo.

The Implementation Strategy in the OCP refers to development of a Hospital Area Plan as a priority action item (Goal Seven, p. 169). The OCP also includes a policy that an area plan is to be developed for the Hospital Urban Node “in consultation with area residents, business owners and stakeholders” (Policy 57, p. 40). These Terms of Reference outline the planning and consultation process to be followed for the preparation of the Hospital Area Plan (the “Plan”).

## **PURPOSE AND GOALS**

Area plans implement the goals and objectives of the OCP by providing more detailed policies for a particular part of the city. The plan area encompasses the lands designated in the OCP as the Hospital Urban Node and adjacent lands (*see Map 1 – Plan Area and Map 2 – Official Community Plan*). The Hospital Urban Node is identified in the OCP as a city-wide and regional center for health services, seniors housing, professional offices and higher density residential uses.

As the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital (NRGH) continues to expand its services, there is a need for diverse commercial and residential uses in the surrounding area that complement and complete those offered by the hospital. The first comprehensive area plan for this part of the city, the Plan will guide the future development around the NRGH and consider related land use and transportation issues. It will also address key related issues including parking, scale and form of development, services, and open space.

Specific plan elements will include:

- Land use designations
- Local services
- Parks and open space
- Public realm considerations
- Road network and parking management
- Bicycle, pedestrian, sidewalk, trail, and other active transportation facilities
- Neighbourhood character and urban design
- Implementation

Once complete, the Plan will be a decision making tool that benefits property owners, residents, businesses and the City through meaningful input into issues affecting future development within the area.

## **PLAN AREA CONTEXT**

The Plan Area (“Area”) is 124.4 hectares (307 acres) in size and located in central Nanaimo. A portion of the Area is designated in the OCP as the ‘Hospital Urban Node.’ The Urban Node includes the NRGH, which provides short and long-term health services for the residents of the Nanaimo Local Health Area (LHA). Island Health is currently completing a planning review to increase the NRGH level of service provision, which is expected to be completed in spring 2017.

The hospital is a major employer in Nanaimo and the availability of nearby parking has been identified as a concern for hospital visitors and employees, adjacent residents and local businesses. The Plan process will address this concern with a parking strategy, while anticipating and mitigating any future negative impacts that an increase in hospital services may have on the neighbourhood.

The Plan will also seek to maximize the benefits the hospital brings to the surrounding neighbourhood and community by identifying development opportunities. Currently, the Hospital Urban Node is characterized by health services, seniors housing, professional offices and higher density residential uses with limited food-service options. The Plan process will assess what services are lacking in the Area relative to the potential demand generated by the daytime population, in order to identify future development opportunities.

The housing stock in the Hospital Urban Node and surrounding neighbourhood includes a significant percentage of the city’s rental housing, primarily in the form of medium to high density residential (50-150 units per hectare) buildings. There are also a number of assisted living facilities in the area. Lands within the Plan Area and outside the Hospital Urban Node are primarily designated as ‘Neighbourhood’ in the OCP and zoned for single family dwellings. The Plan will consider how local residents have been affected by the growth of NRGH, and through public engagement will seek to identify concerns and aspirations for the Area.

**PROCESS AND TIMELINE**

The following is a projected timeline to complete the various components of the plan process. It is anticipated the process will take approximately 14 months to complete.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
1	<p><b>Plan Initiation</b></p> <p><i>Background research compiled (current and projected demographic data, building inventory, market analysis, traffic analysis, historical information etc.)</i></p> <p><i>Internal working group formation (Planning, Transportation, Bylaw, Parks and Recreation, Engineering)</i></p> <p><i>Approval of Terms of Reference by Council; Issue the Request for Proposals for consulting services (market analysis, transportation planning and urban design); Brief CDPC</i></p>	Three months
2	<p><b>Issues and Opportunities</b></p> <p><i>Key Stakeholder Engagement – Focus group meetings</i></p> <p><i>Public Consultation – Evening workshops on key plan elements</i></p>	Three months
3	<p><b>Options Development</b></p> <p><i>Preparation of plan options, discussion with stakeholders</i></p> <p><i>Public engagement (online and live events) about potential concepts for goals and actions within the plan</i></p>	Three months
4	<p><b>Draft Plan</b></p> <p><i>Council update, present draft plan to Community Planning and Development Committee and at public Open House</i></p>	Two months
5	<p><b>Finalize Plan</b></p> <p><i>Completion of revised draft plan and final draft plan submitted to City Council for adoption</i></p>	Three months

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

The Plan process will be overseen by the Community Planning and Development Committee (CPD) whose mandate includes making recommendations to Council on proposed initiatives related to the OCP. As an area plan would require a bylaw amendment to the OCP, Council would need to consider adoption of the plan to complete the area plan process.

The CPD Terms of Reference provides for the neighbourhood associations or representative groups to provide up to three temporary representatives to attend meetings in a non-voting role to review proposed area or neighbourhood plans. As the Hospital Area Neighbourhood Association (HANA) includes and extends beyond the Plan Area, representatives from HANA will be invited to participate in the CPD Steering Committee meetings.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

Key stakeholders will be consulted and provided the opportunity for input throughout the process. Phase 2 of the plan process includes focus groups and/or one-to-one meetings with area stakeholders to better understand the issues and opportunities of the Plan Area. Key stakeholder groups include:

- Nanaimo Regional General Hospital
- Island Health
- Regional District of Nanaimo
- School District No. 68
- Hospital Area Neighbourhood Association
- Area medical practitioners and specialists
- Business community

Additional input will be received through the participation of other external agencies. This will aid in providing additional participation opportunities during the process, and to address technical issues that may arise. Referral agencies may include, but is not limited to; the Ministry of Transportation, Vancouver Island University, BC Ferries, Snuneymuxw First Nation and the RCMP.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

A series of opportunities will be provided to involve the community in the planning process. The public consultation process will include, but not be limited to:

- Focus groups (Phase 2)
- Community meetings (Phase 2)
- Online survey (Phase 2)
- Social media (Phase 3)
- Open house (Phase 4)
- Public Hearing (Phase 5)

Additional input from the neighbourhood may also be conveyed through the neighbourhood association as part of their participation in the CPD Steering Committee meetings.

## **RESOURCES**

The Community and Cultural Planning Section will be responsible for this project. Much of the work will be completed with City Staff resources, with consultants utilized for portions of the project. The City will utilize the services of these consultants to assist with elements of the plan process, including land use and market analysis, traffic engineering, urban design and providing illustrative / graphic skills for development of the plan.

Map 1 - Plan Area



