



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A BOARD COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTION POLICY

**Please note: The original recommendation was varied by the Committee as follows:**

**That the Board direct staff to develop a work program in consultation with Electoral Area Directors and a budget for the creation of a Board Community Amenity Contribution Policy excluding Electoral Areas C and F in 2022.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board direct staff to develop a work program and budget for the creation of a Board Community Amenity Contribution Policy in 2022.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) continues to grow and develop, particularly in the residential sector. To facilitate this growth, land rezoned through the development application process can increase demands on public facilities and services, due to the addition of new residents and businesses in the area. The acquisition of community amenity contributions (CACs) through the rezoning process can relieve increased demands on services and be a means of ensuring that proposed developments make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood and community at large (see Attachment 1 – Background on Community Amenity Contributions).

To provide guidance to development applicants, staff, and the Board throughout the rezoning process, creating a work program and budget to establish a Board Policy on CACs is recommended to ensure the acquisition and provision of community amenities is consistent, transparent and equitable across all electoral areas within the RDN. A Board CAC Policy will help ensure development is acceptable to the community and the appropriate infrastructure, amenities and services are in place to accommodate continued growth.

#### ***Current Practice to Obtain CACs within the RDN***

A high-level review of the RDN's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) identified several goals and policies encouraging Official Community Plans (OCPs) to adopt policies to facilitate the provision of affordable housing, efficient services and the enhancement of human-made amenities that contribute to the unique character of the community and region. CACs can help progress these goals of the RGS by addressing existing RGS policies related to growth and development. An initial review of the six electoral area OCPs revealed a lack of policy guidance on community amenities in some of the more dated plans. Currently, none of the OCPs have a framework to calculate amenity values, which makes negotiating during the development application difficult and inconsistent. A standardized and transparent approach across the RDN would address these issues.

Current RDN practice for negotiating CACs at the rezoning stage is to send applicants a letter requesting "voluntary community amenities". Examples of recently received amenities include parkland dedication, trails and cash-in-lieu in varying amounts. Lack of a uniform framework guided by strong OCP amenity policies creates a method of pursuing CACs that lacks consistency and clarity during the negotiation process. Without a consistent framework to guide the negotiation of CACs during rezoning, all parties involved are at a disadvantage, as applicants may be

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deterred due to lack of transparency and the community may not receive adequate or desirable amenities to address its unique needs.

### ***Existing Practices to Obtain and Calculate CACS***

The Province of BC created a CACs best practices document for local governments that recommends a “planning ahead” approach be used at a community level to identify service deficiencies and other community needs (see Attachment 2 – Existing Practices to Obtain and Calculate Community Amenity Contributions). A detailed inventory on current and future amenities needed to accommodate additional development at a community scale enables local governments to assess the impact of future development. This approach can be used to prioritize amenities and ensure what is being sought is fair and reasonable to both the local government and the applicant. Planning ahead on a community level will create consistency and assist the RDN in the negotiation process, help residents and applicants appreciate the rationale for CACs, and provide a fair and transparent process.

A number of methods for establishing CACs are currently used by local governments across the Province (see Attachment 2 – Existing Practices to Obtain and Calculate Community Amenity Contributions). Creating a consistent framework allows the development community to understand how the value of the amenity is calculated and will provide clarity when amenities are being negotiated through the rezoning process. As establishing a CAC framework is a complex and potentially contentious undertaking, careful implementation involving a thorough review of best practices and existing local government examples, along with consultation with both the development community and residents to create a framework appropriate for the RDN electoral areas, is recommended.

### ***Options to Address CACs***

The following options were identified to address CACs within the RDN:

- 1) Develop a Board CAC Policy as recommended in this report. The development of a Board CAC Policy would create a clear and consistent framework for negotiating the acquisition of amenities throughout the RDN to address growth in the region.
- 2) Update individual OCPs as part of a scheduled review. This option would update policies in amenity deficient OCPs as part of scheduled reviews. Updating individual OCPs would enable comprehensive engagement surrounding desired amenities and value of those amenities. The process could, however, take up to 10 years to complete all OCP updates, and result in a lack of guidance, consistency and returns on amenities until the updates are complete.
- 3) Continue with business as usual and implement no new practice or policies. This will continue the lack of guidance on the type and value of amenities negotiated throughout the region. Without a consistent framework to guide the negotiation of CACs during rezoning, all parties involved are at a disadvantage as applicants may be deterred due to lack of transparency and the community may not receive desirable amenities to address its needs.

### ***Recommended Policy Option - Develop a Board CAC Policy***

A Board CAC Policy would create a framework to create consistency and clarity when negotiating for amenities throughout the RDN to address continued growth. To proceed with this recommended option, the development of a draft work program and budget to create this new policy is proposed (see Attachment 3 – Recommended Policy Option).

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Should the Board direct that this work be undertaken in 2022, workplans and financial plans can be developed to accommodate.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The recommended project is aligned with the 2019-2022 Board Strategic Plan under:

Growth Management - Provide effective regional land use planning and responsible asset management for both physical infrastructure and natural assets.

### **REVIEWED BY**

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### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Background on Community Amenity Contributions
2. Existing Practices to Obtain and Calculate Community Amenity Contributions
3. Recommended Policy Option