

Sustainable Saanich Official Community Plan --- Strategic Update

Assessment of Sustainability Frameworks

March 21, 2022 Council Report – Attachment C



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1. PURPOSE & APPROACH

At the December 13, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council directed staff to provide “feedback on the viability of adopting the One Planet Saanich and/or Doughnut Economics principles as a guiding framework” for the Strategic OCP Update. This report provides the results of this assessment.

The approach applied has two components:

- Researching all three frameworks to better understand their theoretical background, commonalities, and differences; and,
- Analyzing the Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP) (General Plan) against the other two sustainability frameworks to identify gaps and priority opportunities for the Strategic OCP Update.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE FRAMEWORKS

Existing OCP Framework for Sustainable Development

The OCP’s guiding framework is a three-pillar approach to sustainable development. This model, based on the seminal work of the United Nations Brundtland Commission, integrates three fundamental components: the environment, society and economy. The report “Our Common Future” released by the Brundtland Commission articulated the need for economic development to be done differently and for it to support social and environmental objectives without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This foundational work has been expanded on and adapted over time, but still forms the basis for much of the present day discussion around sustainability.

Adapted to the Saanich context, the OCP is structured around the **three sustainability pillars: environmental integrity; social well-being; and economic vibrancy**, which allows for strong integration across its different policy components. The OCP vision statement recognizes the paramouncy of a healthy natural environment, for without it, the other two components (social and economic) cannot be realized (see Figure 1). Along with the overarching vision for sustainable development, sub-visions for each of the three pillars have also been endorsed by Council.

Figure 1: Saanich Vision & Framework for Sustainable Development



This vision and framework has been integrated into key Saanich plans and initiatives, and/or acts as their foundation, including the Climate Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, the Housing Strategy, and Council's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

One Planet Living/One Planet Saanich

Framework Overview

One Planet Living is a framework developed in 2002 by BioRegional UK based on the concept of living within the capacity of the planet. This approach uses ten principles (Figure 2) which are linked to the three-pillar approach as articulated by the Brundtland Commission. Described in the BioRegional video *'What is One Planet Living'*, it is:

"Backed by science and many years of hands on experience, ten simple principles cover all aspects of social, environmental, and economic sustainability. It's not just about the environment, it's also about creating fair societies where people and businesses can prosper."¹

Figure 2: One Planet Living Ten Principles



The One Planet Living Framework has a strong engagement focus encouraging the development of a One Planet Action Plan by individuals, schools, businesses, organizations, community groups, and communities to support one planet living. Several guidance documents for developing action plans are available on the BioRegional website.

Two additional analytical tools support the One Planet approach: ecological footprinting and carbon footprinting (Table 1). These tools were not developed by Bioregional but are recognized by the organization as important in setting targets and understanding the 'one planet' concept and the impact of specific actions and decisions on the health of the planet.

¹ BioRegional UK. 2021. "What is One Planet Living." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZ0erjJFiCE>

Table 1: One Planet Approach – Supporting Analytical Tools

Ecological Footprint	Carbon Footprint
The ecological footprint is an estimate of how much biologically productive land and water area an individual or population needs to produce all the resources it consumes and to absorb the waste it generates. It is measured in global hectares (gha) per capita, where a global hectare is a biologically productive hectare with globally averaged productivity for a given year	Measures carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from human activity. Two common methods are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Territorial - uses an inboundary or territorial approach, which identifies emissions from sources within the region, plus electricity.• Consumption-based approach includes emissions released to produce goods and services consumed within a region, regardless of where they were originally produced. That is, it estimates global emissions resulting from local consumption habits.
Source: District of Saanich, Summary Report – ecoCity Footprint Tool Pilot, 2018.	

One Planet Saanich

One Planet Saanich is an ongoing initiative started in 2018 as part of a global project led by BioRegional UK with funding from the KR Foundation that brought together four communities in different countries (Canada, Denmark, South Africa, and UK) to help cities grow sustainably and boost health and happiness for their residents. Saanich was one of the original participating cities and the project ran in parallel with the development of the updated Climate Plan. Twenty Saanich organizations, businesses, and schools have participated in the program and since created a One Planet Action Plan, committing over 200 climate actions.

One Planet Saanich now falls within the umbrella of One Planet BC, which is led by the BC-based non-profit OneEarth and BCIT's Centre for Ecocities and remains part of Bioregional UK's international One Planet Cities initiative. The involvement of BCIT's Centre for Ecocities reinforces the importance of ecological and carbon footprinting to establish baseline metrics and track progress. The District of Saanich continues to partner on One Planet Saanich, providing support and input to their training, resources and competitions and expanding participation in the program each year.

While the District of Saanich has not created a specific One Planet Action Plan at the municipal level, it undertook an environmental scan of all work against the One Planet Living Framework in 2018 when One Planet Saanich was initiated. This reviewed all District of Saanich work, including the OCP, the Strategic Plan and other key plans, policies, strategies, programs and services. Included in this work was a Consumption Based Emissions Inventory (CBEI) and ecological footprint analysis undertaken by BCIT's Centre for Ecocities, which complemented the community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory (the carbon footprint) that followed the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories, accounting and reporting standard for cities (Basic+). This One Planet review and the emissions inventories were used to inform the Climate Plan, adopted by Council in 2020. The Climate Plan not only integrates a Consumption Based Emissions Inventory (CBEI) analysis alongside the global standard community-wide GHG inventory, but it also uses the ten one

planet principles to inform the Key Focus Areas and climate actions. The one planet principles continue to inform the implementation of the climate plan and e-mobility strategy actions. Complementing the Climate Plan, the OCP and other initiatives such as the Active Transportation Plan, Housing Strategy and Resilient Saanich are all based in the three-pillar approach to sustainable development, and reinforce other aspects of the one planet approach.

Doughnut Economics Model

Overall Framework

The Doughnut Economics model emerged in 2012 as a challenge to traditional economic theory based on growth and tracking progress through the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indicator. This model instead puts the focus on creating a space in which both people and planet can thrive. As founder Kate Raworth states:

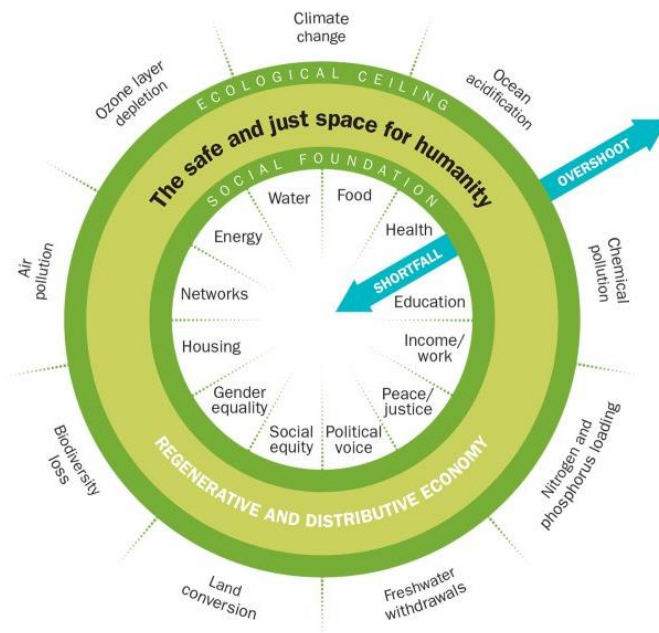
“In the 20th century economics lost its purpose and started chasing the false goal of GDP growth. In recent decades that has pushed many societies into deepening inequality and is pushing us all towards ecological collapse. This century calls for a new goal, meeting the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, it is time to get into the doughnut, the sweet spot for humanity.”²

The model is based on two key boundaries, the ecological ceiling and the social foundation (Table 2 and Figure 3).

Table 2: Doughnut Economics	
Ecological ceiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nine planetary boundaries - Critical life supporting systems - Global limits to what these systems can endure
Social Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social priorities in the UN Sustainable Development goals - Minimum standard of living to which everyone has a claim
The Doughnut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area in between these two boundaries where people and planet can thrive

² Kate Raworth, 1. Change the Goal, <https://www.kateraworth.com/animations/>, 2013-2022.

Figure 3: Doughnut Economics Conceptual Diagram



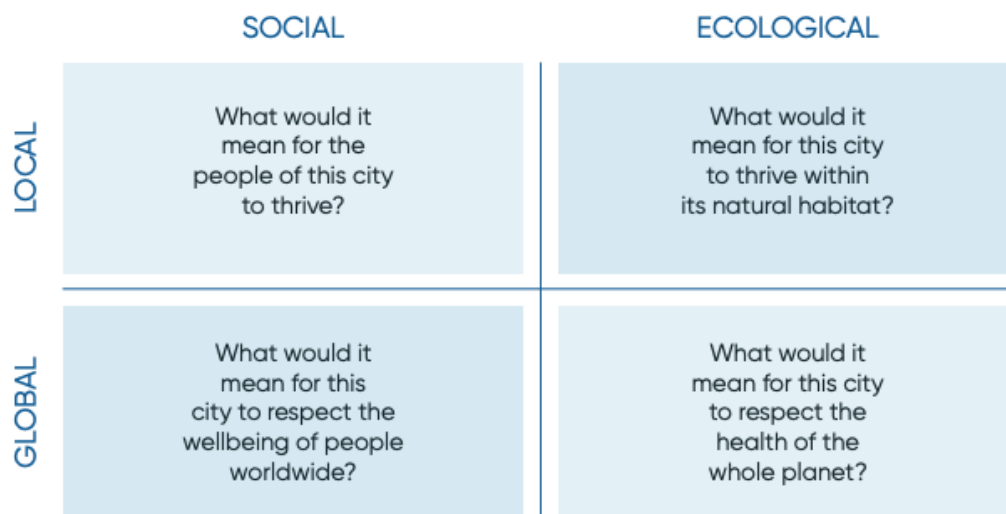
Similar to the One Planet Living Framework, the Doughnut Economics model has a strong focus on taking action, innovative thinking, and learning from each other. To support this, the Doughnut Economics Action Lab was created and serves as a catalyst for a global community working to co-create a new economy. Another innovative aspect of the Doughnut Economics model is its focus on adaptability and modifying the approach to support different contexts while still upholding the spirit of the Doughnut Principles of Practice.

Thriving Cities Initiative/City Portraits

While the Doughnut Economics model is global in nature, a downscaled framework focused on creating thriving cities has been piloted. Using this approach, cities use the principles of the Doughnut Economics model to generate a City portrait by asking the question “How can our city be a home to thriving people, in a thriving place, whilst respecting the wellbeing of all people and the health of the whole planet?”³ The portraits are designed to have four lenses (Figure 4).

³ Doughnut Economics Action Lab, Biomimicry 3.8, C40 Cities, and Circle Economy. Creating City Portraits: A Methodological Guide from the Thriving Cities Initiative. 2020.
https://c40.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#36000001Enhz/a/1Q000000kVxB/fbfzB3ljocdlI7TznSB3u_gMH1aiA7K94DI1USweeCg

Figure 4: Thriving Cities



This approach has a strong focus on capturing the local context and measuring progress. While a set of base social and ecological dimensions was created as part of the Thriving City Initiative pilot project (illustrated through a case study of Amsterdam) the city portraits approach requires communities to identify locally relevant dimensions. Five broad criteria are identified:

- Be locally relevant, rather than comparable between cities;
- Aim to compare desired outcomes versus current performance;
- Create an opportunity for tracking progress and devising policy;
- Offer a holistic 'snapshot' for discussing complex issues; and
- Take the long view.

The intent of the city portraits tool is to be transformative in nature and provide communities with the ability to respond effectively to 21st century opportunities and challenges (e.g. COVID-19, climate change). The methodology for downscaling the doughnut to cities is still new and evolving. The approach relies on qualitative discussions, influenced by the knowledge and expertise of those involved in the process. These types of current state and visioning discussions are already prevalent in our approach to planning and the OCP.

3. DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Approach

A detailed analysis of the Saanich OCP was completed against the principles of the One Planet Living Framework and Doughnut Economics model (Appendix A and Appendix B). For the One Planet Living Framework the OCP policies were analyzed against thirty-eight goals falling under the ten guiding principles as outlined in the document One Planet Living Goals and Guidance for Cities and Regions.⁴ For the Doughnut Economics assessment, the analysis focused on the first two lenses identified through the Thriving Cities Initiative:

⁴ Bioregional UK. One Planet Living Goals and Guidance for Cities and Regions. 2019.

- Local - Social Lens: What would it mean for the people of the city thrive?
- Local - Ecological Lens: What would it mean for the city to thrive within its natural habitat?

Within these two lenses, the 16 social dimensions and 8 environmental dimensions identified for the three pilot cities (Amsterdam, Philadelphia, and Portland) were used to guide the analysis of this framework against the OCP.⁵ If Saanich were to advance the “doughnut approach” it is recommended that locally relevant dimensions be identified to have the most impact. The two global lenses of the Thriving Cities approach were not considered. These lenses are not yet well defined and are less applicable to the legislative and policy context of the Saanich OCP. This is an area to monitor as the methodology evolves in the future.

Key Findings

- The OCP’s foundation in sustainable development as articulated by the seminal work of the Brundtland Commission is still very much relevant and underlies the discussions and frameworks around sustainability today. This makes it suitable to integrate and learn from other models of sustainability.
- The One Planet Living Framework and Saanich OCP are derived from the same theoretical foundation while the Doughnut Economics approach at its roots is different. The Brundtland model (Saanich OCP and One Planet Living) identifies a path for growing smarter and more equitably within the current economic model while Doughnut Economics says we need a new economic model based on thriving opposed to growth. Despite these theoretical differences, there are many similarities in how all three of these models are applied in practice.
- While all models have a strong ‘local’ element, the Doughnut Economics model prioritizes adapting the approach to be locally relevant to a greater degree than the others. To achieve this effectively, significant community/stakeholder engagement and analysis of local data is required. In essence, this model requires a strategic reorientation to community visioning and strategic planning from the ground up.
- Both frameworks provide strong engagement platforms and are action oriented. While not all aspects of the OCP would be covered by it (e.g. infrastructure planning), there is value in linking the OCP with this type of approach (similar to the Climate Plan).
- The District of Saanich has a strong working relationship with One Planet BC and experience in ecological and carbon footprint analysis.
- Overall, the analysis of both models found similar priority opportunities and gaps with regards to the adopted Saanich OCP. These are discussed under ‘Recommendations’.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis, staff is recommending that the Strategic OCP Update incorporate specific priority opportunity areas rather than adopt one of these models as a guiding framework. This approach recognizes the strong foundation provided by Saanich’s current approach to sustainability and allows for some refinement while still maintaining the integrity of the OCP and not triggering a lengthy and full review of the OCP.

⁵ The City of Nanaimo is nearing the end of a multi-year process to incorporate a Doughnut Economics approach into its OCP and overall strategic planning framework. The draft dimensions and indicators parallel some elements of the approach used in the pilot cities however differentiate in other areas to reflect local context and legislative authority.

Four priority opportunity areas, as outlined in the Strategic OCP Update Terms of Reference (Council Report, Attachment A) were identified through this analysis.

- Linking the three-pillar approach to sustainable development with the ten principles of One Planet Living. The One Planet Living approach provides added value to the current model through its strong connection to ecological and carbon footprint analysis (with the focus on living within the limits of the planet) and its power as an easy-to-understand action-oriented framework. Saanich has an existing relationship with One Planet BC to build on.
- Expanding the evaluation and monitoring component of the OCP. This focus on identifying meaningful indicators and tracking progress is a key element of both the One Planet Living and Doughnut Economics models. It should be noted that obtaining and maintaining good, current data requires resources and can be challenging, particularly where support from external organizations or provincial government direction is required (e.g. accessing vehicle kilometers travelled data through ICBC). However, in all models, this data is necessary for us to monitor and track our progress towards our vision and goals. Therefore, this priority area includes the need to develop metrics, identify data gaps, accelerate appropriate data collection and use this to provide an updated ecocity footprint analysis every five years in order to reinforce the “one planet/ecological ceiling” aspects of the sustainability models assessed.
- Review the OCP Social Well-being section and other relevant OCP policies with a focus on modernizing existing language and where appropriate incorporating best practices or identifying future areas of work. These components touch on many of the areas associated with the social floor in the Doughnut Economics model and principles around “Health and Happiness”, “Equity and Local Economy” and “Culture and Community” in the One Planet Living model.
- Reinforce the existing direction in the OCP to develop complete communities based around walkable neighbourhoods supported by transit and active / low carbon forms of transportation.

If Council would prefer to advance one of these other models as a guiding framework for the OCP a full update of the plan would be required. In this scenario, widespread engagement is recommended to develop a new vision statement and update community values within the context of the new guiding framework (followed by policy development and alignment of other strategic District-wide plans/initiatives). This process would require significantly more public consultation, analysis, resources and time than is associated with the Strategic OCP Update. An alternative to complete a full OCP update is discussed in the companion Council Report.