



Sustainability Action Plan: Building on Success

“Victoria is committed to a transformative form of sustainability – one that actually restores ecosystems; uses waste as a source of fuel and energy, and asks how our most vulnerable populations can be part of the solutions for social and economic equality.”

City of Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin

Submitted by the Sustainability Department
on May 8, 2012

Introduction

Victoria is committed to achieving social, environmental and financial sustainability. Both the City corporation and the community are well on their way, but, there is still more to do. This three-year action plan is about building on what is already working well, and striving to be even better - together.

This plan charts how the City will work with and through all its partners to build on existing success, and take the City to the next level of becoming an authentic sustainability leader.

This challenge is about far more than just being 'green'. It is also about:

- expanding the tax base to capture new opportunities in a low-carbon economy
- saving money by reducing waste and inefficiency
- and protecting vulnerable citizens and seeing them as an asset to the community.

Succeeding at this challenge will mean that:

- the city remains clean and healthy for generations to come
- there is a strong and vibrant social fabric that values and empowers all of its citizens
- the City's economy is strong, diverse and resilient.

Sustainability Vision

Victoria, as a community and municipal corporation, is an urban sustainability leader inspiring innovation, pride and progress towards greater ecological integrity, livability, economic vitality, and community resiliency as we confront the challenges facing society and the planet today and for generations to come.

Sustainability Definition

The City's ability to achieve positive, long-term, integrated ecological, economic and livability outcomes in Victoria, thereby increasing our community's resilience.

The City of Victoria has long emphasized sustainability in all of its programs, policies and activities.

Context

The Victoria Sustainability Framework (VSF) was adopted by City Council in 2010. It is the overarching framework for the City's highest level strategic plans, the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP).

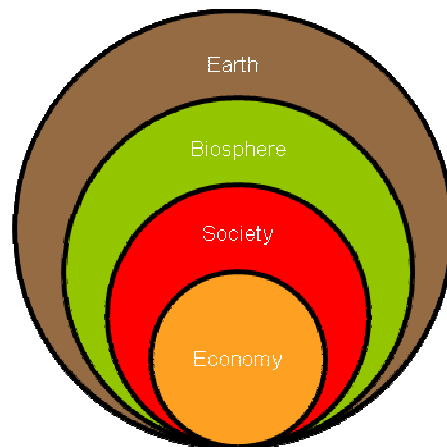
This Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) provides focus areas and resources to take action and move the city towards the sustainability vision and goals laid out in core City documents. For example, the SAP will contribute to many of the goals of the OCP, and each of the areas in the CSP Four Point Plan of "pursuing operational excellence, building a strong community, growing our economy and respecting our environment". It is a direct response to the challenges identified through the City's citizen engagement processes.

The SAP works in concert with the City's Master Plans, priority initiatives, and day-to-day activities. In some cases, the SAP will lend direction to the development and implementation of sustainability-related initiatives. In others, sustainability initiatives, tools and processes will be created and piloted to deliver tangible results, inform public policy, enhance decision-making and make progress towards the sustainability vision.

Why create a Sustainability Action Plan?

Victoria's citizens have expressed a strong desire for continued strong and meaningful action on sustainability issues.

This City has an important global role to play in demonstrating how sustainability can be achieved in real and practical ways that improve our daily lives. Looking beyond backyards, communities and regions one can consider the biosphere and all the natural systems that are a part of it and see that society and the economy are nested within natural systems. The functioning of communities depends on the health of the larger systems within which they exist.



For hundreds of years, society and the economy have been expanding and putting more pressure on the biosphere or natural systems that provide support. This ever-increasing pressure has systematically and consistently degraded the natural biosphere and social systems of the Earth. There is broad acknowledgement in the international scientific community, for example, that many of the world's major ecosystems are in decline, and that there is a great risk of irreversibly damaging many of the natural systems and resources that sustain life on earth¹.

Victoria can, in very practical ways, address these challenges at a local level and in so doing, contribute to larger global solutions. Victoria can be the embodiment of the old phrase, *think globally and act locally*.

Addressing sustainability challenges also presents opportunities. Pollution and waste, for example, can mean great opportunities to reuse resources and save money. The City's new composting program, for example, is creative, turning waste into natural resources for new life. More broadly, there are major opportunities in the world's emerging clean economy. A recent report noted that the current clean economy for the West Coast region totals about \$47.2 billion and more than 508,000 full-time jobs and that this could expand, with progressive policy actions, to \$142.7 billion and 1.03 million jobs by 2020². Victoria needs to assert itself in this area. As the Federation of Canadian Municipalities notes, "innovations will be spurred by rising energy prices and an increased scarcity of resources. Canada should be a world leader in the transition to a

¹ See for example United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). 2012. *GEO5 Global Environment Outlook*: http://www.unep.org/geo/pdfs/GEO5_SPM_English.pdf and Millennium Eco-System Assessment. 2005. *Eco-Systems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis*: <http://www.maweb.org/documents/document.356.aspx.pdf>.

² http://www.globeadvisors.ca/media/3322/wcce_report_web_final.pdf

green economy.”³ It is within Victoria’s collective power to transform the economy, lessen inequalities in society and regenerate natural resources that keep people alive and healthy.

The initiatives in the SAP will help Victoria on its journey to becoming sustainable, living within the planet’s means, sharing resources equitably, and, where possible, moving towards a regenerative society.

Victoria’s Current Reality:

The City of Victoria’s Official Community Plan review process included comprehensive research and public input sessions that describe Victoria’s current reality in many areas⁴. The proposed OCP also presents challenges related to the City’s growth, summarized as follows:

Policy Area	Challenge
Land use management	Population is forecasted to grow, and there is a demand for affordable housing within the urban core, town centres and urban villages.
Transportation and mobility	There is a need to accommodate different modes of transportation within the existing street network. Commuters from neighbouring municipalities will increase road congestion and transportation GHG emissions.
Place-making	Creation of new memorable places while embracing tradition through urban design, heritage conservation and animation of the public realm.
Parks and Recreation	Maintenance of a network of parks, open space and recreational facilities throughout the city that respond to a growing population and aging infrastructure.
Environment	Maintenance of ecosystems and environmental quality within a developing community.
Infrastructure	Replacement of costly aging infrastructure to satisfy citizens’ service needs and to be resilient to the impacts of climate change.
Climate Change and Energy	GHG emissions are projected to increase, contributing to global warming impacts.
Housing and Homelessness	Housing affordability, especially for those requiring subsidized rental units.
Economy	Constraints in the tourism sector due to a high Canadian dollar, high fuel costs and stringent cross border security. Limited growth in government employment in Victoria. Competition for business location from neighbouring municipalities with more land.
Community Well-being	Differing service and infrastructure needs of the elderly and a younger workforce and their families, means increased costs to meet the different needs.
Food Systems	Increasing reliance on charitable food services. Limited access to land for those living in apartments and/or rental housing.

³ FCM. 2012. *Building Canada’s Green Economy: The Municipal Role*. <http://www.fcm.ca/home/issues/environment/the-green-economy.htm>.

⁴ The OCP Engagement process leading to the proposed OCP encompassed: Arts and Culture, Climate Change and Energy, Community Well-Being, Demographics, Economic Trends and Prospects, Emergency Management, Food Systems, Heritage, Housing and Homelessness, Infrastructure, Land Use Management, Natural Environment, Neighbourhood Planning, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Urban design

Policy Area	Challenge
Emergency Management	The major threat to life, property and infrastructure brought by the 32 per cent likelihood of a damaging earthquake within the next 50 years.
Arts and Culture	Arts and cultural industries currently represent four to six percent of Victoria's economy. The sector faces the challenge of insufficient public and private funding. Victoria remains the regional centre for arts and culture facilities, events and activities, but the arts community faces relatively high costs for rental space, and limited availability of suitable venues.

Many of the challenges are specifically addressed by the initiatives in the 2012-2014 SAP, and others are addressed through other City plans and initiatives.

Focus Areas

The SAP is designed to be focussed, practical and achievable for maximum success. As such the Plan contains high impact initiatives that will be implemented over three years (see Appendix A). Initiatives will be carried out in partnership with community members, groups, businesses, other governments (local, provincial and federal) and across City departments.

REDUCE-TRANSFORM-THRIVE	
Reduce:	Reducing Waste and Emissions and Increasing Efficiency
Transform:	Transformation and Leadership
Thrive:	Creating a Liveable City for Everyone

The Focus Areas for the 2012-2014 SAP are:

1. **Reduce:** Reducing waste and emissions, increasing efficiency, reducing environmental damage and increasing cost savings, including through supporting community and corporate energy and greenhouse gas reductions.

This focus area includes:

- Helping the community achieve the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent by 2020; and
- Reducing the environment impacts of the City's operations.

2. **Transform:** Catalyzing regenerative forms of sustainability, including through encouraging sustainability leadership, harnessing market forces and helping transform systems and decision-making.

This focus area includes:

- Developing tools and resources to ensure that the city can make informed decisions on capital projects and procurement from financial, social and environmental perspectives;

- Working with local businesses and other partners to determine the best ways to stimulate the local and regional economy, including the emergence of a 'green economy'; and
 - Conducting research on leading-edge trends and opportunities in the sustainability field that can in turn form the basis for innovative projects in future years.
3. **Thrive:** Creating a liveable city for everyone, including through supporting equitable participation of all citizens in city life and building the resilience of citizens and physical resources.

This focus area includes:

- Updating the City's comprehensive housing strategy with strong, evidence-based policies and actions leading to adequate housing opportunities in the city;
- Supporting the equitable participation of all Victoria's citizens; and
- Helping ensure that the community is ready for the impacts of climate change, such as sea-level rise.

Initiatives to be carried out under the SAP, along with details on Targets and monitoring, and Plan governance are included as Appendices.

Conclusion

The SAP sets forth a blueprint for continued efforts toward sustainability. All of Victoria is invited to work with the City to Reduce-Transform-Thrive!

APPENDIX A - 2012-2014 SAP

Focus Areas	Action Statements	Initiatives ⁵
<p style="text-align: center;">Reducing waste and emissions and increasing efficiency (REDUCE)</p>	<p>The City of Victoria will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce energy use and emissions from civic buildings and fleet; • reduce the amount of waste the City sends to landfill and its related emissions; • save money and reduce capital and operating costs through energy efficiency and reduced carbon costs. 	<p>Corporate Carbon Neutral Plan Development and Implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy consumption in lighting and power in buildings • Greening of fleet and equipment • Reduce power used in street and traffic lighting • Reduce waste
	<p>The City of Victoria will work with citizens, groups and businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help them reduce their energy use and emissions from buildings and transportation; • help them reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. 	<p>Community Climate and Energy Resiliency Plan – energy and GHG reductions strategy. Possible projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public BikeShare Program Development and Pilot Implementation • District Energy Policy and Governance Development. • Point of Renovation Energy Audit Policy and Program Development and Pilot Implementation. <p>Kitchen Scraps and Garbage Program</p>

⁵ Many of these items will extend beyond the three-year term of the SAP.

Focus Areas	Action Statements	Initiatives ⁵
Transformation and leadership (TRANSFORM)	<p>The City of Victoria will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transform City processes such that City initiatives more formally take into account social, environmental and economic sustainability from start to finish; develop, test and use practical tools that allow the transformation to take place; establish a sustainability innovation research agenda to evaluate new and emerging local government policies, programs and practices; mitigate financial and capital risks associated with climate change. 	<p>Sustainable Procurement Action Plan implementation.</p> <p>Sustainability Toolbox – e.g.: develop tools to ensure integration of social, environmental and financial sustainability into key areas such as asset selection and management and develop guidance for renovation of civic buildings.</p> <p>Sustainability innovation research and action agenda may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> financing and funding infrastructure and services (e.g.: closed loop systems, user fees with incentives for sustainable choices, carbon pricing). Eco-districts (aligned with future Local Area Planning process).
	<p>The City of Victoria will work with citizens, groups and businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to grow a strong partnership with UVic to harness the energy of youth, post-secondary knowledge, and UVic’s academic network. Support a thriving local economy through support for sustainability leadership, innovation and enterprise in the City and region. 	<p>City-UVic Protocol of Cooperation 2011-2012 Work Plan item: joint efforts on the City’s Stormwater Utility (Work Plans are set out annually by the City and UVic)</p> <p>Engage with a group of business leaders and set out City and private sector actions to expand investment and business in green technology, health technology and clean technology in Victoria.</p>

Focus Areas	Action Statements	Initiatives ⁵
<p style="text-align: center;">Creating a liveable city for everyone (THRIVE)</p>	<p>The City of Victoria will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationalize its community grants into a Civic Investment Program; • support the expansion of an adequate, affordable housing supply to meet forecasted demand. 	<p>Implement Civic Investment Policy, which will ensure more effective and accountable City granting</p> <p>Conversion of 2 former motels (120 Gorge and 710 Queens) to sustainable, affordable and supportive housing.</p>
	<p>The City of Victoria will work with citizens, groups and businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the equitable participation of all Victoria’s citizens in the social, economic and political life of the city, particularly its most vulnerable populations; • understand and reduce the risks of a changing climate to infrastructure and to Victoria residents⁶. 	<p>Review and update of City of Victoria Comprehensive Housing Strategy, including the development of a City Rental Housing Policy using citizen input.</p> <p>Climate Change Adaptation Plan Development and Implementation.</p>

⁶ The City of Victoria is developing its Climate Change Adaptation Plan through ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability’s Climate Change Adaptation Initiative: <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=8708>.

Appendix B - Targets and Monitoring

Success in implementing the SAP will be measured in the following ways.

First, the City will be guided by key existing targets including:

- Reducing community GHG emissions by 33 per cent by 2020, based on a 2007 baseline
- Meeting the City's commitments under the BC Climate Action Charter for carbon neutrality by 2012

Second, the City has established additional targets for completion by the end of 2012 related to specific SAP focus areas:

- Ensuring the completion of a Community Climate and Energy Resiliency Plan, an integrated climate change mitigation and adaptation plan, and
 - The initiation of at least one major project to implement that plan.
 - Public dissemination of community vulnerability assessment, including recommendations for building resiliency at home.
- Development of at least one new Sustainability Toolbox tool to ensure that City decision-making is informed by social, environmental and financial sustainability criteria;
- Public dissemination of a community adaptation risk analysis and launch of adaptation plan development;
- Develop a multi-stakeholder plan or roadmap, together with partners, to enhance sustainability leadership in the region and the local green economy;
- Ensure the adoption of a new Civic Investment Program policy to guide City grant funds; and
- Complete needs assessment in support of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy and have initiated at least one major initiative to implement its findings.

Third, the City is developing a Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting System with the following goals⁷:

1. The City monitors and reports progress to learn and adapt as needed.
2. Corporate and community decision-making processes are defensible, clear and open to the public.

Sustainability indicators will be selected by the City to show progress towards the Sustainability Vision, and to allow for adjustments to City initiatives as needed.

An interim review process for the 2012-2014 SAP will occur in late 2013, in order to chart progress and begin development of a list of possible initiatives for the 2015-2017 SAP.

⁷ These goals are from the City's proposed Official Community Plan, Section 23, Monitoring and Evaluation

APPENDIX C - Roles and Accountability

The 2012-2014 SAP has been developed and focussed to ensure that it is realistic and achievable within its 3-year time frame. Responsibility for completing the initiatives set out in this document is represented in the following diagram:

Implementation:

City of Victoria Sustainability Department, in partnership with other City Departments:

- leads, co-leads, or coordinates to achieve the goals of the initiative;
- prepares updates, progress reports, recommendations, draft plan/process for 2015-2017 SAP; and
- monitors and reports on progress towards the Sustainability Vision.

Advice:

Technical Advisory Panel (TAP):

- 2012-2014 SAP - receives updates, progress reports and assists with implementation;
- 2015-2017 SAP – assists with development of plan and process;
- provides advice regarding new initiatives, new methods, process; and
- provides expertise when citizen engagement activities are carried out.

Manage:

City of Victoria Management: SAP Project Team:

- receives updates, progress reports on 2012-2014 SAP;
- receives and provides input to draft plan/process for 2015-2017 SAP; and
- in conjunction with the Sustainability Department, makes recommendations to City Manager and Governance and Priorities Committee.

Decision-making:

Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC):

- reviews/revises/approves recommendations from the SAP Project Team; and
- makes recommendations to City Council.

City Council:

- receives updates;
- makes decisions; and
- sets future direction.