

Victoria Sustainability Framework

Recommendations to Project Team on Next Steps

20 March, 2009

We have reviewed the feedback received from the March engagement sessions. To address the concerns, we've prepared recommendations on moving forward with the process for your consideration and for our further discussion with you at the next project team meeting on March 23rd.

We see the next steps for the community portion of the framework to be different than the corporate portion. The next steps for each are therefore described separately.

Community Portion of the Framework

The **initial project approach** can be divided into the following main components:

- A) *Setting the destination (the framework structure and goal statements)*. This was informed by drawing from existing materials and previous engagement efforts. Staff and community engagement helped to inform the process.
- B) *Establishing measure and baselines*. Working with the project team and City staff to identify indicators and to collect baseline data.
- C) *Sheltair's high-level recommendations for strategies and next steps*. This would involve some best practice research and making recommendations for the action planning process moving forward, in consultation with the project team.
- D) *Packaging results*. The framework will be compiled on a website and inter-relationships between various goals will be identified i.e. cross referencing to other goals that might affect or help support any given goal.
- E) *Stakeholder / Task Force action planning*. It was anticipated that this process would be fall outside the Sheltair contract and be coordinated by the City during the fall (based on Sheltair's recommendations in part C).

Parts A and B have been completed, although some stakeholders indicated a desire to revisit the framework. We believe there is value in **giving stakeholders a better orientation and appreciation** of the work to date so that they can have an informed opportunity to make modifications. We are also **cautions not to further delay the process by going backwards** to revisit work that has been through a lot of thinking / engagement in the community and that will further attribute to the frustration of those that "just what to get on with it" and talk about real action.

Given the feedback received from the stakeholders, we would **recommend that part C be redefined** as the stakeholders indicated a strong desire to move forward with the action planning and to draw on local knowledge and expertise within the community to identify best practises and strategic actions.

Rather than Sheltair spending the effort now to do best practice research and developing recommendation for strategies (part C), we **recommend that part E be initiated as soon as possible**. An outline of our recommendations for this process is described below.

There are various levels of engagement that the City can undertake with its stakeholders, ranging from informational, to consultative, to empowering stakeholders. Feedback from the last session indicated a strong desire to empower the stakeholders in the community. We **recommend that, at this stage, the City establish Task Forces and empower them** to define actions for Council to consider. The underlying assumption is that stakeholder empowerment will initiate a greater sense of ownership and confidence in the intentions behind the Framework and the City's efforts to implement actions. We recognize that this level of empowerment can also raise concern for the degree of effort and time involved, and the lack of control over the outcomes (i.e. recommendations that Council / staff do not agree with or support).

Recommendations for Initiating Part E

A recommended process for moving forward is outlined below. This process does not consider timeline, budget, and staff resource constraints, and should further be explored to establish what is realistic within these crucial parameters.

1. Create a Steering Committee:

To date, the planning approach used to develop the framework has been driven by the project team (staff) and the consultant. We recommend expanding the Project Team to include 2 or 3 community stakeholders. Having stakeholder input at the frontend of the planning process will enable a broader set of opinions to be included in planning the remaining steps of the project. It will also create a more inclusive planning process that will help bridge the gap between the City and the stakeholder perspectives. This should ideally happen before a "next step" plan get presented to Council.

2. Convene Steering Committee (SC) for Scoping meeting

The SC will meet to review these recommended next steps and modify it as needed. The SC will define:

- how many task forces will be created,
- who should be targeted to join,
- the scope of action planning (mandate),
- the terms of reference for the groups, and
- the number of Task Force meetings and objectives of each meeting.

3. Confirm Next Steps with Council

4. Establish MOU's with Key Implementation Partners

It should be clearly established if the Task Forces' action planning scope will focus on the municipality only (i.e. actions that fall within the municipal mandate and scope) or if it goes beyond to include other partners as well, such as the CRD and BC Transit. If the Task Forces' scope goes beyond the municipal mandate, it is important to engage key partners in the process to enhance the

feasibility of action implementation and generate support for the Framework. It is recommended that a MOU be established early in the process to notify partners of the Task Force initiative, to invite formal participation in the process and establish commitment to review the results as part of the business planning process.

5. Establish the Task Forces and Terms of Reference

The task forces should involve key community stakeholders with a key interest and/or expertise to the particular theme areas. The Task Forces should act primarily as an expert group, but might involve also a few individuals that are there to contribute more broadly (e.g. Councillors, youth representatives, key implementation partners). Both supporters and critics - should be invited to join task forces where they have a particular expertise and/or resources to support implementation. A manageable size for each task force would be between 8 to 12 people. Each task force should appoint a chair that will act as a liaison with the SC and who might be tasked with certain volunteer responsibilities (such as disseminating information, coordinating input in-between meetings, or compiling meeting minutes). A Terms of Reference should be drafted that clearly outlines the expected time requirements and how the City intends to use the results produced by the Task Forces.

6. Task Force Meeting 1: Framework Orientation Session

After the last session, participants felt there was not enough time to review the background and context of the sustainability framework and its components, contributing to confusion and anxiety about how the input will be used. To address this concern, we propose taking a brief step back in the process to provide a more thorough orientation with each of the Task Forces when they convene for the first time. The session will review the framework, its goals and indicators in detail. Task Force members will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on the goals and indicators and suggest changes, where warranted. This is also an opportunity to outline the Task Force's terms of reference, to set some ground rules for how the group will work together, and to discuss the objectives of the subsequent meetings.

7. Task Force Meeting 2: Target Setting

There has been ongoing interest to develop targets for the framework. This was discussed previously as a future task the City might undertake as funding allows. Given the strong feedback received from stakeholders on establishing numerical, tangible targets, we recommend that targets be developed by the Task Forces wherever possible. The targets could be presented either as:

- “task force suggestions / visionary targets” which will be used as a reference, or
- “pragmatic targets” that will be adopted by Council and used as a key measure for judging progress.

In our experience, setting targets is very valuable however; it requires careful consideration and research to ensure that Council will adopt targets that are defensible. When setting targets it is important to bear in mind that not all sub-themes are suitable for targets and that target setting is strategic and should only be done for a limited number of goals. Prior to the meeting, it will be necessary to identify which subthemes will be suitable for targets and to collect additional benchmark information for comparison.

8. Task Force Meeting 3: Action Planning Brainstorm

Task Force members should identify the key issues and brainstorm ideas for action for each goal. A lot of information and ideas have already been collected from the community and these should be reviewed by Task Force members prior to the meeting. Criteria for evaluating each of the proposed actions should also be identified by each Task Force and a combined, final list of criteria should be established by the SC. It should be clearly established if the task Forces are to identify actions for the municipality only (i.e. those that fall within their mandate and scope) or if it goes broader to include other partners as well. The input on priority goal areas gathered from the community and the stakeholders during previous engagement efforts should be considered as part of the process to help direct the Task Forces to those goals that were felt to be priority by the community at large.

9. Research on Best Practices

Between meetings, conduct additional research to identify other best practices that will meet the goals and add these to the list.

10. Action Evaluation Matrix

Establish a matrix of all the suggested actions and the evaluation criteria agreed upon. This would require one or two people (staff or consultants) to conduct a methodical evaluation in consultation with a volunteer from the Task Force. The draft results of the assessment should be shared with the Task Force ahead of the next meeting for review. Some criteria that might be used to evaluate the actions would include:

- Contribute to our community's ecological integrity
- Contribute to the liveability / social well-being of our community and its people
- Contribute to the ecological viability of our community and its people
- Contribute to the resiliency of our community and its people
- Synergy with other goals
- Return on investment

11. Task Force Meeting 4: Action Planning Priorities

Each Task Force will review the matrix results and make changes as needed to reflect the top priority actions. From this list of priorities the short (5 yr), medium (10yr) and long term (20 yr) actions could be identified, as well as the agency responsible for leading the implementation. Typically the short term actions are those that are directly connected to meeting the goal. Medium term and long term actions often build on the short term actions and require more time for implementation.

12. Compile the Results & Share with Implementation Partners

Corporate Portion of the Framework

The feedback received from staff on the corporate portion of the framework suggests that there is general satisfaction with the framework thus far. The staff participants are also more up to speed on the

Framework process to date and have a better understanding of how the Framework will be used. Next steps are identified below.

13. Tweak Goal Statement Wording

The ongoing feedback from staff suggests that there is general satisfaction with the framework goals, however we recommend slightly rewording the goal statements so that they are more clearly focused on corporate responsibilities. This will alleviate any confusion between the corporate and community components of the framework and since the See-it model will no longer be used, the original rationale for combining community and corporate goals no longer applies.

14. Establish Corporate Task Forces

Similar to the community sessions, there might be a few Task Forces established to focus on the corporate goals and actions. We anticipate that there will be fewer Task Forces required than with the community process. Two Task Forces (one focussed on corporate facilities, vehicles and assets, and another focussed on employees and policies) might be sufficient. Council indicated that they have not had an opportunity to fully engage in the Framework, and participating on the Task Forces could be one option to get them more involved.

15. Repeat Similar Action Planning Process

A similar process to the community action planning will be followed. Some corporate actions might be generated through the community Task Force process, that should be considered by the corporate Task Force. The orientation session could likely be scaled back, assuming participants on the Task Forces are the same individuals that have been involved to date.