

Victoria Sustainability Framework

Summary of Results Corporate and Community Engagement Sessions March 2/3, 2009

In early March 2009, City of Victoria staff, Councillors, and key public stakeholders gathered for an overview and update of the Victoria Sustainability Framework, to discuss how the City is currently performing on each of the goals identified in the Framework, identify goals that are high priority in the short-term, and identify the underlying causes / challenges that will need to be addressed to make progress in prioritized goal areas. Two sessions were held. The first on Monday, March 2nd, brought together approximately 40 staff and Councillors to discuss the 29 goal statements that apply to corporate operations. The second session on Tuesday, March 3rd, brought together approximately 55 community stakeholders, some City staff and Councillors to discuss the 39 goal statements that apply to the community at large

The workshops were facilitated by The Sheltair Group and the City of Victoria. Facilitators included Lourette Swanepoel, Gillian Moran, Aviva Savelson, and Susan Todd (Solstice) from The Sheltair Group, with support from Cameron Scott, Lucina Baryluk, Kevin Kay and Mark Hornell from the City of Victoria. These sessions were the second stakeholder meetings for City staff of the Victoria Sustainability Framework planning process, and the first stakeholder meeting for invited community members to participate in the process.

Both the corporate and community sessions were divided into 4 activities: defining and validating selection criteria, evaluating goals against the defined criteria, electing priority areas for short term action, and discussing fundamental issue that will need to be addressed to start closing the gap.

For the first activity participants were provided with a draft set of assessment criteria, including:

1. Size of the Gap
2. Time Sensitive (Urgency)
3. Ability to close gap (knowledge, capacity, technology)

Following some group and plenary discussions on what the best set of criteria would be, the draft set of criteria were modified as follow:

Corporate

1. Size of the Gap
2. Ability to have an impact
3. Bang for your buck

Community

1. Size of the Gap
2. Ability to close the gap
3. Return on investment

The second exercise focused on assessing goal statements against the agreed upon criteria. For the corporate session, participants split into six groups of approximately eight people each, and focused on two specific subthemes and goal statements, one at a time for 15 minutes. Each group reflected how the public perceived progress on a goal statement, reviewed the indicator data and inventory outcomes, and discussed the three decision criteria for each goal statement. Coloured dots were used to assess how the City/ Community are currently doing on each goal statement in relation to each decision making criterion.

'Red' dots represented 'Hot': a high potential for change, a high concern, or the need to sprint to action
 'Yellow' dots represented 'Warm': a medium potential for change, medium concern, or jog to action
 'Blue' dots represented 'Cold': Low potential for change, not a pressing concern, or walk to action

Once coloured dots were assigned, the group posted the goal statement sheet on a large ranking board, ranking the goal statement as doing OK for now (blue), needing attention (yellow), and needing immediate attention in the short term (red). This process was then repeated with five tables of approximately ten people each, addressing two goal statements, and a third time with six tables of eight, addressing only one goal statement. As goal statements were posted on the large ranking board, participants were asked to rank the need for immediate action in relation to the other goal statement dealt with at that table (five in total) and then to put forward to plenary the most pressing priorities for short term action to be considered in plenary.

Corporate

In the Corporate session 18 priority areas were elected for consideration in plenary:

Response and Recovery	Transportation Energy and Air Contaminants
Solid Waste	Revenue
Social Interaction	Safety
Local Food Supply	Potable Water
Building Energy and Air	Recreation
Proactive Preparation	Inclusion
Accountability	Financial Management
Monitoring	Health Care and Wellness
Health Care and Wellness	

Community

In the Community session, 26 priority areas were elected for consideration in plenary:

Response and Recovery	Solid Waste
Rainwater	Social Interaction
Mobility	Local Food Supply
Poverty	Transportation Energy and Air Contaminants
Housing Affordability	Building Energy and Air
Community Engagement	Liquid Waste (Sanitary)
Natural Features & Habitat	Arts and Culture Entertainment
Land Development	Proactive Preparation
Downtown and Harbour	Accountability
Resource Security	Monitoring
Tourism	Material
Infrastructure	Lifelong Learning
Employment	Health Care and Wellness

The third exercise involved selecting top priority areas for short term action out of the short-listed goal statements. Participants were given voting dots and asked to place them on goal statements that they

felt are in need of immediate attention (based on the criteria identified and used thus far). The results from the dotmocracy exercise are given below, with top ranked goal statement in boldface:

Corporate

Response and Recovery	12	Transportation Energy and Air Contaminants	22
Solid Waste	9	Revenue	26
Social Interaction	0	Safety	8
Local Food Supply	4	Potable Water	3
Building Energy and Air	8	Recreation	0
Proactive Preparation	8	Inclusion	0
Accountability	0	Financial Management	0
Monitoring	0	Health Care and Wellness	18
Infrastructure	35		

Community

Response and Recovery	0	Solid Waste	5
Rainwater	8	Social Interaction	4
Mobility	21	Local Food Supply	19
Poverty	24	Transportation Energy and Air Contaminants	31
Housing Affordability	30	Building Energy and Air	10
Community Engagement	20	Liquid Waste (Sanitary)	5
Natural Features & Habitat	10	Arts and Culture Entertainment	6
Land Development	18	Proactive Preparation	6
Downtown and Harbour	31	Accountability	17
Resource Security	5	Monitoring	8
Tourism	8	Material	0
Infrastructure	10	Lifelong Learning	2
Employment	0	Health Care and Wellness	15

The closing exercise of the workshop focused on exploring the fundamental issues to overcome in order to make short term process on the goal. Each table explored key issues, why these challenges exist, and what the City can do to address issues. Summaries of the table discussions for the Corporate and Community Engagement sessions are included in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

The input received from these sessions will help to inform the City's action planning efforts. Participants at the community session also provided a lot of feedback on the overall Victoria Sustainability Framework process and the key components that they would expect to see in subsequent steps. This feedback has been reviewed and recommendations on next steps will be put forward to Council.

Appendix A

Outcomes from Corporate Priority Table Discussions

Transportation, Energy, and Air Contaminants

A Transportation Demand Strategy is needed for the City. There is a need for a corporate carpool initiative. This could involve providing incentives to drivers such as subsidized parking for carpoolers, and expanding on the pro-pass subsidy. In addition to using fleet vehicles to travel to satellite offices, there is a potential for bike pooling for staff (sign out a bike). These initiatives could be presented in an e-bulletin, targeting those who drive.

In addition, the City's fleet needs more attention. The City should procure zero emission vehicles, in addition to the current smart cars and alternative fuel vehicles. New vehicles purchases should be evaluated not only for fuel efficiency but also for externalities along the production chain. A destination review could be undertaken to understand where bikes could be substituted for fleet vehicles, and purchased accordingly.

There was a suggestion to change the indicator to Total Fuel Consumption "and GHG emissions" by Fuel Type.

Infrastructure

Main issues include the age and maintenance backlog of Victoria's traditional infrastructure, and the changing of priorities to develop new, green infrastructure for the City.

There is a significant infrastructure gap in the City of Victoria. There is a lack of sidewalks, a need to replace sewers, roads and water works, update buildings, maintain numerous ornamental parks, and not enough funding to deal with all these issues. Then, at the same time, there is a growing awareness that the old or "traditional" infrastructures that need replacing and updating are out dated and not designed to meet Victoria's desire to be a sustainability leader. The tension between maintaining the status quo and reallocating funds to green infrastructure puts pressure on Victoria's infrastructure, and is also a key concern to the community. The public expects the traditional infrastructure to work, and believe the City should be pursuing green Infrastructure 'in addition to' rather than 'instead of' expensive, outdated solutions. This is rooted in the history of the City, and sometimes is expressed as preservation.

The City can display leadership by designing for the future rather than playing catch up with aging, outdated infrastructure.

Proactive Preparation

The primary objective for action was to gain understanding and commitment to action of senior staff and political leadership. The vehicle for doing this is a comprehensive program of education, awareness raising and communication to overcome what is perceived to be apathy on this topic at the senior leadership level. As a first step, this would result in the incorporation of staff training and practice exercises into department workplans with defined expectations for participation. This is an interim

objective toward gaining awareness and commitment to action that an integrated, coordinated regional response is the only effective way to move forward.

Longer term outcomes that would flow from this include:

- Adoption of a regional plan with coordinated asset management (e.g.: protocols and decision rules regarding who uses what according to what criteria) and response/recovery delivery.
- It was felt that the current multi-jurisdictional, low coordination model needs to be replaced by an integrated regional emergency management agency, with a single regional emergency operation centre.

Community Engagement

The discussion on community engagement was segmented into two elements: internal staff engagement and the City's approach to community engagement. Many of the identified issues were common to both engagement within staff and engagement with the broader community.

Internal engagement is seen to be significantly impeded by established silos, culture, and time constraints. Participants identified that silos exist amongst departments, within the staff hierarchy, and in the physical separation of work spaces. The overall culture of "That's how we've always done things" was identified as a concern, as well as a lack of willingness to change this culture. Staff noted that time constraints limit the quantity of engagement and the time to reflect and improve upon public processes. A suggestion to rectify some of the internal engagement issues was to develop coordinated interdepartmental work plans that are approved by Council.

With respect to citizen engagement, concerns were expressed over the limited range of consulted citizens, the limited use of technology, and the general approach to engagement. It was noted that consultation was disproportionately targeted to a vocal minority, and generally targeted to older generations. Additionally, it was noted the City is afraid to use new communication tools and did not have the technological capacity to conduct appropriate outreach. Other concerns included not being clear about the purpose of engagement, not trusting staff to communicate, and not having sufficient time and resources to conduct outreach. A solution to address a number of the issues would be the development of a toolkit to guide engagement with appropriate techniques, technology, and training..

Revenue

Issues

- There is a dramatic infrastructure deficit in the City
- pressure to decrease business share of tax
- Economic crisis leads to slower growth, leads to no new buildings, and no new tax payers.
- Property taxes are communal, and lack discipline of user pay. Less Behavioural change.
- Citizens and businesses are not paying full costs of services when you take into account replacement costs
- Public expectations for services are increasing
- Resistance to giving up any current services
- deferring maintenance has future costs in financial and human resource time allocation terms

Why Challenges Persist

- Public not aware of issue because we have not experienced a major failure, and therefore are not wanting to invest
- Long lumpy development cycles and they all fail at once
- Need to determine full costs when settling tax rates
- Few options for raising revenue
- Property taxes are regressive
- 60% of population are renters
- Federal funds are earmarked for new initiatives

What can we do?

- Convert to user pay for storm drains, which will influence development and free up general revenue
- Examine new revenue streams (fees on legal agreements, service reviews)
- build incentives into recycling
- Communicate and engage with public on why city is investing in conventional 'un sexy' things
- deal with backlog and celebrate progress

Health and Wellbeing

Issues

- Staff aren't always present when they are at work
- People are working long hours, senior staff are working off hours on their blackberries
- Staff aren't taking enough breaks
- There is always a sense of urgency which drives staff to work long hours
 - Concerned that they need urgency to get things done
 - There are high expectations from citizens
- There are a lot of policies to promote wellness but staff don't take advantage of them
- More work does not equal effective work

Solutions

- Need more education on health and overworking
- Need internal support to make the shift in attitude towards making health a staff priority
 - Need Management support to take breaks
 - Need constant reminders
- Promote more flexibility in work days to accommodate peaks and valleys in work flow
 - E.g. take time off after working overtime
- Need more lunch/break amenity space to encourage people not to eat lunch at their desks
- Need more education/awareness on health benefits available
- Need more incentive programs to promote wellness
 - E.g. bike to meetings reimbursements.

Appendix B

Outcomes from Community Priority Table Discussions

Land Development:

Effort should focus on the human-oriented side of the goal statement. The group suggested that the City set a target that 80% of all people should live/work within 400 metres of a commercial centre (up from the roughly 50% at present). Define the solution and then stick to it; and, focus on an effective pattern of the distribution of population across the city. Transit access was also an element discussed.

Downtown and Harbour

The Downtown and Harbour should always be viewed as an entity, and serve the entire region. Policies respecting Downtown as a retail centre for the region need to be re-evaluated. Synergy is high for residential and tourist areas. If a City is good for residents, then it will also be good for tourists. The character of Victoria is unique, and it should be preserved. New developments should be sensitive to the scale and character of the existing buildings and context.

Opportunities include: There are many opportunities and challenges with respect to the Downtown and Harbour. The challenges are multi-layered, and not only deal with aesthetics and tourism, but public safety. The City has enormous capacity have influence the outcomes, however, it is limited in the sphere of influence in the Harbour due to jurisdiction. The Triple Bottom Line advantages are also enormous, however, it was noted that the social and economic criteria often take precedence over the environmental aspects.

Transportation energy and Air

Solutions

- Transportation alternatives needs to be more attractive
 - A better network of bike lanes
 - Clean cycle paths
 - Repaint lines
 - More lanes
 - Secure parking
- Need to make public transit more of a priority than SOVs
- Have more efficient transportation corridors
- Have a clear target and align transportation goal with province ~ 12.5% transit mode share
- Need a transportation hierarchy like the City of Vancouver
- Have better bus shelters and bus schedules
- Develop neighbourhood UPasses
- Improve pedestrian realm – use a walkability scorecard.

Local Food Supply

Participants identified a number of issues and potential solutions to improve local food supply. The principle issues relate to regulations, community capacity, and physical spaces. The adoption of bylaws that allow people to grow and sell food, as well as allowing use of City boulevards for gardening were identified regulatory changes. It noted that capacity could be improved by strengthening connections between growers and buyers, supporting

cooperatives, and enhancing food production infrastructure (i.e. nurseries). The incorporation of green roofs and living walls, as well as a central community farmer's market in Downtown were seen as a key physical element that could be added to enhance local food production.

Mobility

Issues

- Costs may be an obstacle

Solutions

- Better delineation for on-road and off-road facilities
- Safety training related to cycling
- Support services for cycling s during events (temp bike parking, etc)
- Bike to Work Week support events like
- Access, connectivity
- Maintain public access during development
- Mid-block walkways to be maintained
- Continue improvements to bike parking, corner bulbs
- Create Downtown transit zone that is free
- Extend service hours of transit
- Minimum service requirements involving frequency
- Better integration of pedestrian/ cyclist network
- Flexibility in transit network
- Focus transit services on user needs (seniors, for example)
- Neighbourhood bus passes
- LRT
- Improve pedestrian network and realm

Poverty

Issues

- Housing Affordability
- Affordable, appropriate mobility
- Access to affordable amenities
- Quality of Life as it relates to cost of living- very hard to live well in Victoria
- Ability to create wealth
- lack of neighbourhood resources (everyone has to own one of everything, rather than sharing and reducing costs)
- Root cause of other issues like social exclusion
 - Ability to create wealth
 - Sense of self
 - Involvement in community
- Literacy is a big issue

Solutions

- Affordability of busses, recreation- These things are city controlled and we can make them more accessible
- Mixed, affordable housing

- Link to policy decisions on accessibility and affordability
- Mandate a living wage

Community Engagement & Accountability

To Consider

- Engagement and accountability animates human resources
- All consumers have power through purchasing and political choices over all other issues
- Our purchases represent ourselves: they illustrate our priorities. We need to develop community buy-in to effect change
- Avoid NIMBYism and act as a community as a whole
- Improve knowledge and understanding in the community
- Informed decision making needs education
- Consultation does not equal permission
- Community is a resource: can be a source of creative solutions and ideas for change

How

- Improve communication
- take on identity of sustainable community
- Community should be involved in the design of a consultation process
- Spend time thinking about community members to be engaged with
 - Community members need to invest time in understanding process and issues

Housing Affordability

Key Challenges

- Construction per unit cost is too high, making many developments not financially viable
- Need help with perception of what is acceptable for affordable housing, our standards are extremely high
 - Really need to define housing need
- The key is Municipal planning & zoning
- Need to look at density (the increasing of), there is big opposition in the community
- Important to consider the externalities: properties are being purchased by non-residents; may be helping in driving prices up, making it difficult for locals especially young families getting a starter home, seniors looking for alternative housing types, etc.
- Important to manage expectation about what is possible
- There are structural things to consider: e.g. policy development – like relaxing parking restrictions when considering housing developments of certain types