

DATE OF MEETING December 14, 2020

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SUBJECT REIMAGINE NANAIMO AND THE DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS  
FRAMEWORK

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide Council with information on the Doughnut Economics framework and respond to Council's motion to amend the Strategic Plan, adopt the framework into REIMAGINE NANAIMO, and to amend the 2021 work plan for the Environment Committee.

## **BACKGROUND**

During the Regular Council Meeting of 2020-NOV-16, Council passed the following motion:

*"It was moved and seconded that Council direct Staff to prepare a report regarding the following three items and bring forward to a future Governance and Priorities Committee meeting for further discussion between Council and the REIMAGINE Nanaimo team:*

- 1. That Council, as part of its Strategic Plan review process, consider replacing key Focus Area 1 under the Environmental Responsibility Key Focus Area with: "We will take responsibility to build a city and community that operates within the planetary boundaries necessary to maintain core life-sustaining ecological functions."*
- 2. That the City of Nanaimo adopt the Doughnut Economic Model as a cohesive vision for all City initiatives and planning processes, focused on social and environmental sustainability as defined by the model, and be supported by a localized, objective based, and evidence-based framework through the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process.*
- 3. That Council amend the Environment Committee Work Plan and re-focus it to address the environmental components of this social and environmental sustainability framework."*

## **Defining Doughnut Economics**

First published in 2012, Kate Raworth, a Senior Associate at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute, developed the Model as a way to meet "humanity's 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges while staying within the means of the planet".

On a global scale, the Model aligns a set of social indicators developed by the United Nations that set minimum global living standards, including basic needs for food, housing, healthcare,

and equity for each person. These standards are to be met and exceeded while not adding pressure on the Earth's life-supporting systems, which include a stable climate, fertile soil, and a protective ozone layer (Rockstrom et al.)<sup>1</sup>.

The Model is labeled as a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to balance development between meeting key social needs and avoiding pushing beyond our ecological limits. The social needs identified focus not only on economic growth, but on thriving, resilience, and wellbeing within communities (see Attachment A – Doughnut Economics Framework).

The Doughnut Framework Model has been applied on a national scale (for Costa Rica) and on a local government scale in cities such as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Portland, Oregon. In addition to the two North American cities, the City of Amsterdam in the Netherlands worked with the Doughnut Economics Lab and C40 Cities to create a 'City Portrait' community framework. This methodology looks at local-social and ecological indicators and contrasts it to the global-social and ecological impacts that result from the economic choices of the community (as shown in Table 1).

**TABLE 1: City Portrait Lenses**

	SOCIAL	ECOLOGICAL
LOCAL	<u>Local-Social Lens:</u> What would it mean for the people of Nanaimo to thrive?	<u>Local-Ecological Lens:</u> What would it mean for Nanaimo to thrive within its natural habitat?
GLOBAL	<u>Global-Social Lens:</u> What would it mean for Nanaimo to respect the wellbeing of people worldwide?	<u>Global-Ecological Lens:</u> What would it mean for Nanaimo to respect the health of the whole planet?

The cities that participated in developing the City Portrait framework defined 'thriving' for their communities through an analysis of city-wide resident opinions and by working with city staff to identify official targets and indicators that best correspond with each domain.

### Related Plans and Indicators

The Doughnut Economics Framework is consistent with the City's existing policy framework; indeed, many social and environment indicators are already reported on through the Regional District of Nanaimo's annual Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Summary of Indicators (to which the City provides significant input). In some areas, the City both contributes to the RGS Annual Report and provides its own annual report specific to City of Nanaimo's actions (e.g., Affordable Housing Annual Update, which provides updates on figures such as the number of rental and affordable units created over the last year).

<sup>1</sup> Rockstrom, Johan, et al. (Sept. 2009) A Safe Operating Space for Humanity. Nature, Vol. 46/24

Another initiative already underway with strong synergy with this framework is the Health and Housing Action Plan, which emphasizes a systems approach to solving homelessness. Some of the Key Performance Indicators included in measuring the success of the Plan by 2025 include having 100% of the people experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness access appropriate housing and have services, supports, and interventions provided to at least 20% of people at risk of homelessness.

The draft Economic Development Strategy (the “Strategy”) is well aligned with the Doughnut Economics Framework. Part of the task of synchronizing the Doughnut Framework with the Economic Development Strategy will be identifying indicators that show we are implementing the overall Strategy objectives in a way that ensures we are not overtaxing our eco-system. Another part will be developing measures that track the economic well-being in the community, not just the economic growth (for example, looking at the average hourly wages as a proportion of the living wage).

Likewise there are a number of key environmental indicators the City currently collects or that can be accessed through other levels of government, which have been collected for many years. Several of these indicators can be used in developing the City Portrait for Nanaimo.

Through City mapping and GIS data (i.e., Orthophoto data and LiDAR) a number of environmental land use indicators can be followed, such as proximity to natural spaces through parkland, tree canopy size, and impervious/pervious surface. These indicators help monitor public accessibility to access nature, urban forest health, and groundwater infiltration, which helps sustain our urban watercourses and wetlands.

A number of water quality indicators are collected by the City to monitor water use and water demand. This helps the City assess the effectiveness of any water conservation programs. Natural watercourses are also tested through Regional District of Nanaimo’s Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program. Stream water quality indicators, such as dissolved oxygen and sediment load, provide insight into the ecological health of our fish bearing streams and wetlands.

The Province of British Columbia monitors air quality in Nanaimo and uses a series of indicators at two permanent monitoring stations in the city. This helps protect public health and helps track air pollution levels over time. In addition, the Province provides energy and fuel consumption data to local governments, which help track community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions levels. Currently the City is working with a consultant through REIMAGINE NANAIMO to establish a consistent GHG tracking capability by the City.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Strategic Plan Review**

At the Regular Council Meeting held on 2019-JUN-17, Council adopted the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.

The Council Strategic Plan provides strategic direction for Council in its decision-making. The Strategic Plan is reviewed regularly in Council’s term to assess progress. As strategic priorities change on an operational level, the Strategic Plan is adjusted to reflect this.

Currently, there are four strategic themes: Environmental Responsibility, Economic Health, Governance Excellence, and Liveability.

Under Environmental Responsibility, there are two key focus area:

- a) Take a leadership role and focus on our environmental impact and climate change contributions in our decision-making and regional participation.
- b) Ensure our community and transportation planning are multi-model designed to encourage active and public transportation.

Council has previously completed a review of the Strategic Plan at the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting held on 2020-JAN-27 through a facilitated strategic planning workshop.

Revising the Environmental Responsibility section of the Strategic Plan with language specific to the Doughnut Economic Framework is within Council's mandate and may better reflect Council's current position statement.

If Council wishes to proceed with the amendment to the Strategic Plan, Staff will bring a report forward seeking formal approval to add the following language *"We will take responsibility to build a city and community that operates within the planetary boundaries necessary to maintain core life-sustaining ecological functions."*

## **2. REIMAGINE NANAIMO Process**

The REIMAGINE NANAIMO process is already well suited for adaptation to this model since it is a single process that is being used to update multiple plans across the social and economic domains.

Staff propose a City Portrait for Nanaimo be created in order to scale down the Doughnut Economics Framework, and that it be blended into the process currently being followed to create and update the six City plans included in the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process. In addition to developing a City Portrait for Nanaimo, Staff will identify appropriate targets and indicators that can be easily and effectively measured and are relevant to the community to be tied into the REIMAGINE process.

Further work is still needed by Staff and the consulting team to confirm the other process steps to adapt the Model for REIMAGINE NANAIMO. |

## **3. Environment Committee Work Plan**

The Environment Committee will be reviewing their 2021 Work plan during their upcoming 2021-JAN-27 meeting. At that time, the committee will be asked to review, offer amendments, and endorse a draft work plan presented by Staff.

A staff report can be prepared for the Committee, referencing Council's motion to include a focus on the adoption of the Doughnut Framework, specifically "addressing the environmental components of the Social and Environmental Sustainability Framework". The Committee can consider and debate the motion at that time.

If Staff are directed to advance the motion in this Staff report, an information report will be prepared for the Committee that reviews existing environmental indicators used by the City of Nanaimo and by other jurisdictions, such as the Regional District of Nanaimo, District of Saanich, and the Capital Regional District. This information will help in discussions to define the global and local ecological indicators Nanaimo could adopt as part the process to define its Doughnut Economics Framework. The final list of environmental indicators will be used in the process to integrate the Doughnut Economics Framework into the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Doughnut Economics Framework can be incorporated into the Corporate Strategic Plan, adopted into REIMAGINE NANAIMO, and included as part of the 2021 work plan for the Environment Committee

Staff can bring forward a report to amend Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan if Council wishes incorporate the Doughnut Economics Framework into the Environmental Pillar of the Plan.

Staff can adapt the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process to identify the existing social, environmental, and economic indicators the City uses to measure progress. The Doughnut Economics Framework can be adapted to create a City Portrait that informs and shapes changes to how progress will be measured across a variety of realms.

Upon direction from Council staff will prepare a report for the Environment Committee that reviews existing environmental indicators used by the City of Nanaimo and by other jurisdictions, such as the Regional District of Nanaimo, District of Saanich, and the Capital Regional District that could be used in the City's Doughnut Economy Framework. |

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- At the 2020-NOV-16 Council meeting, Staff were asked to prepare a report outlining how the Doughnut Economics Framework can be incorporated into the Corporate Strategic Plan, adopted into REIMAGINE NANAIMO, and included as part of the 2021 work plan for the Environment Committee.
- First published in 2012, UK Economist Kate Raworth developed the Doughnut Economic Model as a way to meet "Humanity's 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges while staying within the means of the planet".
- Many of the concepts included in the Doughnut Economics Framework exist within the City's policy framework and others can be added as part of the REIMAGINE process.
- The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan can be amended to indicate that the City will take responsibility to build a city and community that operates within the planetary boundaries necessary to maintain core life-sustaining ecological functions.
- Staff propose a City Portrait for Nanaimo could be used as a scaled-down Doughnut Economics Framework to be integrated into the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process currently underway to create and update six key City plans.

- The Environment Committee's 2021 work plan can be amended to include the environmental components of the Social and Environmental Sustainability Framework.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Doughnut Economics Framework |

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