

DATE OF MEETING March 8, 2021

AUTHORED BY REIMAGINE NANAIMO TEAM

SUBJECT UPDATE ON DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on progress towards developing a Nanaimo Doughnut Economics City Portrait for use in the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.

BACKGROUND

During the Special Council meeting held on 2020-DEC-14, Council passed the following motion:

“That the City of Nanaimo adopt the Doughnut Economic Model as a cohesive vision for all City initiatives and planning processes; and that a city portrait for Nanaimo be created to scale down the doughnut economics framework, that the city portrait be blended with the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process and that the appropriate measurable targets and indicators relevant to the community be identified and included in the framework to track progress.”

The ‘Doughnut Economics Model’ is described as a 21st century approach to meeting key social needs, while ensuring we do not exceed the ecological limits of Earth’s life-supporting systems. The model is a new way of reframing existing economic theories to achieve thriving, resilient communities that do not exceed ecological limits, while meeting social equity goals. Although the model was developed to address change at global and nation-state levels, the approach can be ‘downscaled’ and adapted to local government and smaller places. This can be done by creating a customized “doughnut” along with a ‘City Portrait’ that allows local governments to customize the model to their unique environmental, social/cultural, economic, and political contexts.

A City Portrait is explained as a holistic snapshot of the city and its impact through four lenses – social and ecological, and local and global – which together provide a new perspective on what it means for a city to thrive. The City Portrait methodology combines local aspirations (thriving people in a thriving place) with global responsibility (both social and environmental). This involves requiring every city to consider its complex interconnections with its immediate ecological context as well as the rest of the world. The city of Amsterdam has led the way with applying the method in Europe, and a few local governments in North America are also developing City Portraits (including Philadelphia and Portland). While these examples are very insightful, it is clear the process and outcome for developing a City Portrait is intended to reflect the unique context of each city/place.

DISCUSSION

Designing a City Portrait for Nanaimo

On 2020-FEB-24, Council endorsed six guiding principles for the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process. These include:

1. Build on successful policies in existing documents;
2. Incorporate Council's strategic themes identified in the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan: Environmental Responsibility, Governance Excellence, Livability, and Economic Health;
3. Acknowledge and address the priorities of climate change, Truth and Reconciliation, and sustainable service delivery;
4. Include robust community engagement in the creation of plans and strategies;
5. Incorporate a monitoring process to measure and track progress; and
6. Provide a clear and coordinated vision to guide community-building for the next 25 years.

Integrating these guiding principles into Nanaimo's City Portrait aligns with the Doughnut Economics City Portrait process, which involves identifying the focus (lenses) or criteria for determining local standards of community and ecological well being. Draft examples of how this can be framed using a unique Nanaimo Model is provided in Attachment A.

The following steps are underway and also being proposed to downscale the doughnut framework to apply to the REIMAGINE Nanaimo process:

1. *Selecting our focus (lenses) for developing Nanaimo's Doughnut Model and City Portrait*
This will be grounded in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and linked directly to the guiding principles that Council endorsed on 2020-FEB-24 for the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process, as well as the outcomes of the Phase 1 Engagement process.
2. *Identify Targets and Indicators*
This will involve researching existing and potential targets and indicators, followed by workshops with Staff, committees, and Council to review and select a proposed set.
3. *Mapping Nanaimo's Social and Ecological Context*
This will involve using existing background research and baseline data.
4. *Confirming Targets/Indicators/Portrait*
This will involve returning to Council with a finalized 'City Portrait' based on their input and the steps above.
5. *Using Nanaimo's City Portrait to Evaluate Possible Scenarios:*
Work with Council to evaluate future potential land use and policy scenarios prior to the launch of Phase 2 Engagement to gather community feedback.

Choosing Targets and Indicators to Measure Progress

Part of creating a unique, customized City Portrait involves understanding each local government's ability to influence/control impacts on the social and ecological system they are

part of and setting targets to improve social and ecological priorities. One of Council's guiding principles includes to "incorporate a monitoring process to measure and track progress". This aligns directly with the second step in developing the Nanaimo City Portrait to identify "Official City Targets" and select "Performance Indicators".

On 2021-JAN-27, the Environment Committee received a Report for Decision with a list of possible environmental indicators for incorporation into the Nanaimo City Portrait. After discussion, the committee passed the following motion:

"That the Environment Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to schedule a charrette to help refine indicators for use in developing the City Portrait for Nanaimo as part of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process."

Following Council discussion at the Regular Council meeting on 2021-FEB-22, Staff proceeded with sending out formal invitations for a virtual 2021-MAR-10 charrette (workshop) to all members of Council and two committees of Council (the Environment Committee, and Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness). Invitations were also sent out to other key stakeholders who had participated in the recently concluded Economic Development and Health and Housing Task Forces. This diverse and manageable representation will help ensure feedback on progress measures (targets and indicators) with those knowledgeable about Nanaimo's Economic, Social, and Environmental context. Following this workshop, a draft list of targets and indicators can be circulated through Get Involved Nanaimo and stakeholder lists to allow a broader group to provide feedback.

Staff intend to return to Council at their 2021-MAR-22 GPC to confirm a list of possible targets and indicators, along with a draft City Portrait to be used as a framework to evaluate possible land use scenarios. Based on Council direction at this meeting, a workshop will be scheduled with Council in the early spring to review potential land use and policy scenarios. This will be done with the aim of finalizing one or more scenarios to gather community feedback as part of the launch of Phase 2 public engagement in April/May.

CONCLUSION

A preliminary draft Nanaimo Doughnut Economics Model has been developed for Council consideration using the guiding principles provided by Council for the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process, and in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

As part of this, Staff have identified steps to create a customized Nanaimo City Portrait to apply the customized doughnut model. The portrait will provide a holistic snapshot of Nanaimo and its impact on both community and ecological well-being at both the local and global scale. Developing the portrait involves using technical research, together with a process for gathering feedback and direction from Council and committees to create a Nanaimo City Portrait that will involve targets, indicators, and benchmarks.

A Nanaimo City Portrait will provide the City with a unique perspective on what it means for our city and citizens to thrive while taking responsibility for our ecological and social impacts within our region and wider global context. Importantly, the City Doughnut Model and Portrait will serve as tools to evaluate potential land use and policy scenarios. This will help inform the wider community when they are asked to provide feedback on scenarios as part of Phase 2 of

the REIMAGINE NANAIMO engagement process. These tools are also the foundation for monitoring/tracking progress towards a final scenario selected by Council as part of Phase 3 of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process that will also include community engagement.

SUMMARY POINTS

- A preliminary draft example of a Nanaimo Doughnut Economics Model has been developed using the guiding principles provided by Council for the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process and in alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- Staff have identified steps to create a customized Nanaimo City Portrait to apply the doughnut model. City Staff are currently in the process of identifying existing and potential targets, indicators, and benchmark data to create a unique Nanaimo City Portrait.
- Following Council direction and discussion, a workshop has been scheduled on 2021-MAR-10 for members of Council, City committees, and other key community representatives to provide feedback on targets and indicators for the development of the City Portrait.
- A Council-endorsed City Doughnut Model and Portrait will serve as tools to evaluate potential land use and policy scenarios, central to community engagement during Phase 2 of the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Example of a Nanaimo Doughnut Model

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