

Opportunities and Perspectives
Doughnut Economics Philosophy – Working Group
Mayor’s Leaders’ Table
(September 24, 2021)

“The eagle overlooks Jack’s Point, and will tell us when the salmon are coming”, he says. “When the bear roars, we know to get ready for the salmon. The killer whale is our protector at sea. And the woman is an ancestor telling us to take care of the land, and each other.” Brown laughs ruefully as he adds, “But we don’t listen.” Noel Brown

Source: Welcoming pole recentres Snuneymuxw village at Nanaimo waterfront

<https://thediscourse.ca/nanaimo/snuneymuxw-welcoming-pole-maffeo-sutton>

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INTRODUCTION

The Doughnut Economics Philosophy Working Group convened meetings in July/August to discuss the questions identified below. Members of the Working Group articulated perspectives and described opportunities to further develop, align with, and implement the Doughnut Economics Philosophy. This document is a synopsis of that dialogue and contains key messages for further discussion at the Mayor’s Leaders’ Table.

Q. What would it look like for your community or organization to align more fully with doughnut aspirations?

	<p>Reflecting on the social foundation of the Doughnut Economic Philosophy (DEP) model, organizations could revisit mission, vision, values, programing, supports, community partnerships in context of the DEP foundation and more fully align these statements.</p> <p>As social agencies, work within mandates and funding to ensure that the basic needs of our clients identified in the inside of the doughnut are met; food, shelter etc.</p> <p>The word peace is in the inside of the doughnut but that word does not traditionally include safety – public safety might be a more appropriate aspiration.</p> <p>Much of what is contemplated in the inside of the doughnut devolves to issues of exclusion vs inclusion, or inequality vs equity. “Societies can be deeply damaged by income inequality” said Kate Raworth, and the DEP posits social stability as the foundation to prosperity. Yet, from a community perspective, Nanaimo has a cohort in the community whose social exclusion is evident due to their unhoused status, whose networks are minimal or non-existent and for whom the basics of life are often insecure or entirely absent – given Kate’s statement, the larger this group gets the less secure our social foundation becomes. To realize the aspirations of the DEP, our societal values related to substance use and mental illness need to change as they are key contributors to social instability. Our community will need a significant shift in how we view these topics and how we include the marginalised in our community life.</p> <p>Addressing the ecological ceiling of the model requires education. For Nanaimo, a good places to start are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ education (environmental sciences) on protection of local eco-forestry and bio-sphere though a partnership with organizations like the Eco-Forestry Institute Society➤ more programming in partnerships with other organizations can be developed to educate members of the society on recycling/restoring, environmental degradation, and conservation of natural resources eg Synergy Foundation.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ place more emphasis on the environmental impact of operations; reducing waste, improving the energy performance of buildings and reducing carbon emissions from fleets ➤ through education, hands-on experience and awareness, Nanaimo residents will all speak with more clarity of our commitment to the these issues and of our unity around a better tomorrow <p>Overall: Where identified, develop more impactful policies and actions toward outcomes beyond organizational mandate (aligned with DEP) and gain approval from governance.</p>
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Q. How can we engage the community, businesses, partnering organizations and First Nations in the development of the City’s ambitions as a doughnut community?

	<p>Although we have made great strides, we have missed some opportunities, as a City, to engage specifically First Nations people as we attempt to work within a reconciliation environment that prioritizes the experiences of Indigenous peoples. So the first order of business should be to reach out. That means asking the Nations whose land we live, work and play on, what their view of the DEP is...how does it speak to and reinforce their traditional values and practices? (Note: In New Zealand the doughnut economy model was recreated in collaboration with members of the Indigenous (Maori) Maya Roy people of that country. The result was a model that embodied the wisdom of the Ancestral people, aligned with the needs of the modern world. The central question was: what is the role of Indigenous people in the circular economy?)</p> <p>For the broader community, business and partnering organizations, it is recommended that engagement occur through various means; talking circles, presentations, and idea café’s. Providing various opportunities to fully flesh out the model and the ways in which to engage with it and be part of it would be crucial. Finding ways to include new input so that a finalized model is not the outcome, but an evolving process that can continually grow in inclusiveness.</p> <p>SFN are one owner of the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation and should continue to play a lead role in developing the local economy. Invite input and empower. Work with local First Nations to support Indigenous entrepreneurialism, startups and social enterprise providing opportunities to work within the DEP.</p> <p>Specific reference to youth. How do you invite youth to the conversation? Opportunity to have a youth voice to learn and promote the doughnut economic philosophy.</p> <p>Communicate to stakeholders and the public how and why DEP-related decisions might have changed from prior times and how consideration of the DEP model modifies how we think about the work we do.</p> <p>Set examples by aligning and implementing the DEP model.</p>
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Q. How can the city's DEP model support and incorporate Truth & Reconciliation?

<p>How do we ask/engage with First Nations to understand what their priorities are?</p> <p>Providing supports and funding for increasing business opportunities for Indigenous community.</p> <p>Partnering with Indigenous group to provide education to general public on history of local First Nations groups via e.g. cultural nights evening, cultural tours, cultural sports games events, written historical guides for newly arrived members of our community, and more presence on the social media.</p> <p>Increased communications throughout the community around values. Taking a strong stance publically on what is acceptable and what is not.</p> <p>Develop public joint infrastructure projects that celebrate our Indigenous population and celebrate working together.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Social equity is a key issue; traditionally the First Nations are not treated equally, nor do they have access to the same opportunities as the non indigenous population. On a pragmatic level this subordinate position is reflected and reinforced by our place names.➤ Income and work; opportunity to explore increased employment opportunities for First Nations within the City of Nanaimo and other public sector agencies.➤ Housing – the disparities in the quality of housing are clear; elders in our community have a tougher time finding housing stock to rent, and have been historically excluded from the mainstream economy to an extent that home ownership is not an option. Culturally appropriate and affordable housing must continue to be a priority.➤ Peace and Justice; Indigenous offenders are over represented in the criminal justice system (30%) and partly arises from judicial responses to offending behaviours. While most of the laws are outside the City's jurisdiction achieving the community's aspirations around reconciliation will require different thinking about why specific laws are created (municipal Bylaws), and on what basis should they be created going forward.
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Q. How can the City support the community, businesses, and partnering organizations in adopting doughnut economy principles and values into their own work?

	<p>Investing and supporting local businesses working towards Food sustainability, water and forest preservation, air quality improvements, recycling and reusing facilities etc.</p> <p>The City take a leadership role in celebrating achievements/actions aligned with the DEP, in a similar fashion to the Cultural Awards – for example: expand business awards to celebrate social foundation progress and ecological ceiling considerations.</p> <p>Establishing ethical standards not only based on specific professions but on the planetary boundaries.</p> <p>Developing policies on diversity and inclusion to create welcoming and inviting community that can be shared among all business partners and community organizations.</p>
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Q. What Strategies should the City consider in pursuing its goals? What are the priorities? Where are gaps? What opportunities exist?

	<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ improved communication with City citizens through various means, reflections/reporting on city progress and achievements, vision sharing, tasks groups, and community engagements, etc. Inclusion of DEP Decision Making Framework in staff reports. ➤ Direct statement about growth, and a new way of looking at growth and development. The ‘wellbeing’ economy. Defining the metrics for success of growth. ➤ the City should undertake an evaluation of its practices and legislative framework with a post-modern lens; what are the implicit biases embedded in what is done? ➤ instill knowledge, awareness of goals, and integrated thinking among the shareholders, directors, employees and contractors of the future Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation (NPC) about the role of that organization and those individuals in incorporating DEP thinking in their goals and mission. Direct the NPC to seek out business and industry that align with the doughnut economy and attract these unique businesses to be part of our progressive community. ➤ understand that all social issues have a distinct connection with the economy. <i>You simply can’t have a healthy economy – no matter what the model is – if you don’t have a healthy community.</i> Everyone needs to continue to advocate to senior levels of government to provide the funding and resources necessary, across ministries, to provide relief to those on the street and opportunities for them to be helped. ➤ have key City staff representing various City departments be part of the steps forward, partnering with community organizations to engage in learning opportunities, and to assess on a departmental level, how to best engage in developing the DEP model
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- the City needs to maintain a heightened profile for this ‘aim’ in its communications with citizens so it doesn’t get passed off as ‘flavour of the day’ thinking. Point to examples in work on the ground, highlight community partners in their actions, and seek out new stakeholders in our growth to a doughnut economy.

Priorities:

- the priorities need to be the inner circle; the social foundations as local government has a lot more control over the influencing factors in this area than they do over the global climate or macro- economic policy
- increased diversification of the economy; labour market opportunities – business and work, retention of workers, young people, students, creating a welcoming and diverse community, improve health and social condition for many vulnerable residents, and provide educational opportunities for young people

Gaps:

- better collaboration and understanding among stakeholders of their services, business, etc.
- challenging the status quo - joint events/ symposiums...these need to be frequent and regular at the beginning to build momentum

Opportunities:

- exist in supporting local business and development of local business to integrate the DEP into a startup and/or operations
- ‘there is nothing but opportunity. Over the past years and in particular, through the pandemic much clarity has come out around inequities and abuses in our society. This is the time for bold action...a time to show that we truly mean it. Let us seize the day...Carpe Diem!
- use of the public realm to achieve some of our goals; privileging the car over all else has come at an ecological cost; there is an enormous road network facilitating urban sprawl, perhaps the road network could be transformed to serve the ideas of social inclusion or environmental renewal as well
- Consider: some citizens of Nanaimo look at the homeless as a source of shame for the community. What is not heard enough is, “what have we done as a community that has caused this?” or “how can I as a taxpayer fund programs that are not currently available to the mentally ill, homeless or addicted?” What is behind unhelpful attitudes is the assigning of crime, poverty and addiction to some sort of moral failing.
- Also consider: the City may not be the public body that directly funds programs needed, but the City can be very vocal and strongly advocate for them. This sends a strong signal to program funders that the City of Nanaimo is willing to work with partners to address social issues within the DEP.

Q. How would your organization like to be engaged?

	<p>Non-profits can play an important role to build a more caring and just economy - Help non-profits to model practices, work with community leaders to provide space for conversations, presentations on community led ideas and alternatives.</p> <p>Create a funding model to assist local organizations use public facilities for projects / conversations that align with and move forward our efforts.</p> <p>Exploring financial and community partnerships that would increase staff of non-profits of all sizes to have adequate healthcare coverage and insurance coverage, as one example.</p> <p>Exploring cooperative social enterprise to model creative and compassionate fundraising that is not based on competition but is more equitable. (Currently, there are a couple of large and well-known organizations that get a lot of public attention for fundraising, leaving smaller non-profits scrambling for smaller amounts.)</p> <p>Contribute energy to a continuing committee or task force of local economic stakeholders to maintain conversation, interest and awareness of the ongoing efforts to pursue practices of a DEP and incorporate a periodic communications campaign to talk on the subject, and perhaps host lunch and learns or similar educational events (Nanaimo Chamber).</p> <p>Doughnut Economic Coalition (Amsterdam) – what lessons could be transferred to Nanaimo? Force outside of City Hall driving the DEP Framework.</p>
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