

The Nanaimo Doughnut

Where We Are Now
& Road Map

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Background.

Nanaimo has embraced Doughnut Economics, building its own Doughnut City Profile and using these ambitions to form the backbone of its integrated 25-year plan, [Nanaimo Reimagined](#). As a city experiencing exponential growth, this critical ambition to welcome 40,000 new residents within the next 20-25 years while working within the ecological ceiling for place and planet is, we believe, an economic and social differentiator that makes Nanaimo an attractive magnet for talent and investment.

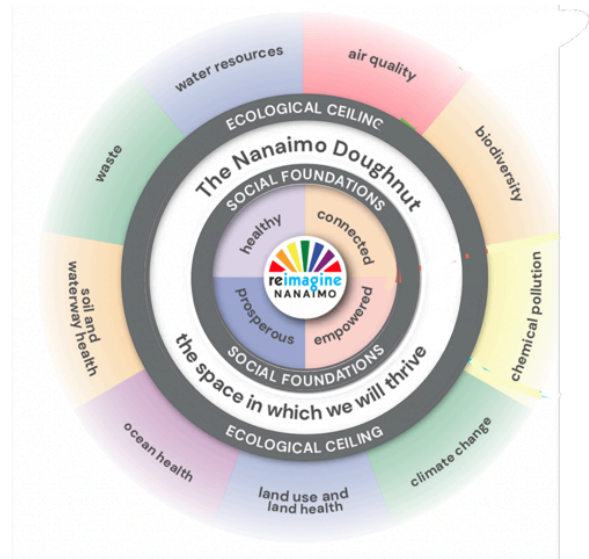
The Nanaimo Doughnut City Profile led to the identification of Five City Goals as the backbone for Nanaimo's [Integrated Action Plan \(IAP\)](#) and paved the way for key initiatives and successes - such as waste diversion, e-bikes, complete streets, and significant strides in water protections, housing, tree canopy, and more.

That said, activating and integrating the framework takes constant engagement and co-creation with all stakeholders. It means nurturing a culture of shared ownership - inside administration as well as across the entire ecosystem. After all, the Doughnut is only as effective as a community's understanding and enthusiasm to invest in its potential.

In short: building a more regenerative Nanaimo now and into the future is about culture, purpose, and mindset. None of which happens organically.

With the launch of the Nanaimo Framework Monitoring Strategy - and a recognition from some members of City leadership that understanding and stewarding of Doughnut Economics might be waning - Future Fit Cities was engaged to gauge sentiment and knowledge levels within the City as it is fundamental to the ongoing progress of the IAP and City Plan.

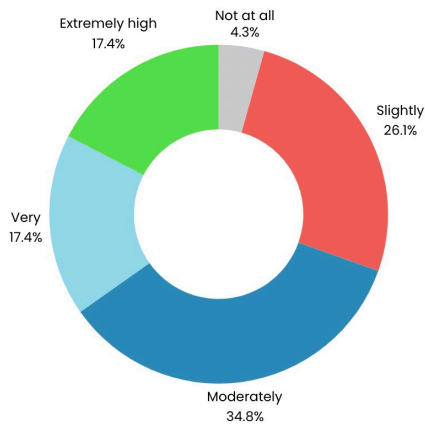
The following is our reflection on what we heard, recommendations and a high level road map of partnerships and activities that can aid the City of Nanaimo in energizing and scaling up capacity and efforts that bring the Doughnut to life in meaningful ways for staff, civic partners, industry, and the community-at-large.



Where Are We Now? Pulse Survey.

If we know where we are now, we can better map where we go next.

Based on interviews and a workshop with City leadership, staff, as well as representatives such as SPO, tourism and economic development, Future Fit Cities took the ‘pulse’ of key individuals and partners to better understand their level of knowledge, engagement and sense of prioritization of Doughnut Economics and the Nanaimo Framework.

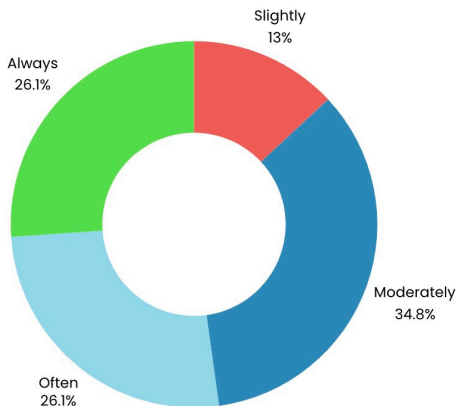
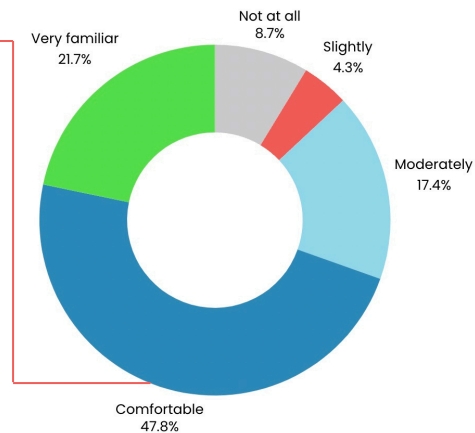


Rate Your Level of Engagement with Doughnut Economics Since the Creation of the City Plan.

While all interviewees and participants understood and could champion the Five City Goals as key priority themes, it is notable that - given the Nanaimo Doughnut is the backbone for the City Plan and IAP - over half of respondents still felt their engagement levels with Doughnut Economics was more of a light touch.

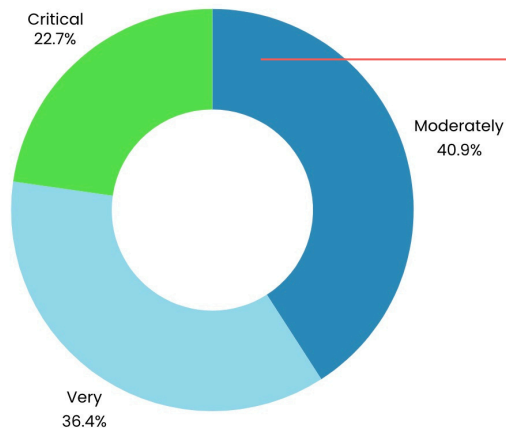
Familiarity with Doughnut Economics:

Nearly 70% of respondents felt comfortable or very familiar with Doughnut Economics. This is a great baseline to build from, indicating that comfort can equate to curiosity, building to leadership and expertise. The 30% who fall into lower levels of familiarity are key individuals to engage in further education and awareness.



How Often do you Incorporate Doughnut Economics into your Day-to-Day Work?

Just over a quarter of respondents said they incorporate Doughnut Economics into their day-to-day work. It’s great starting point noting that most surveyed are in a leadership position. 49.8% of respondents answered ‘slightly’ and ‘moderate’ levels of daily engagement. Increasing those levels is a key goal - starting with increasing comfort and familiarity.

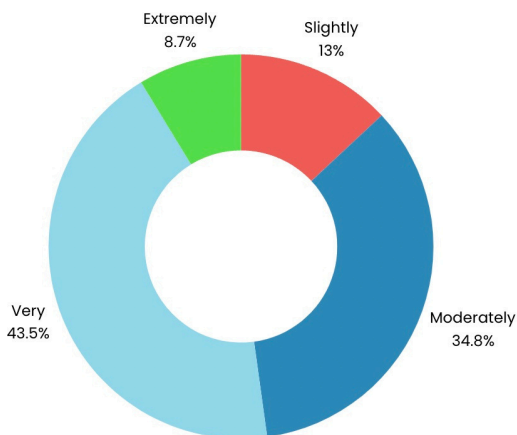
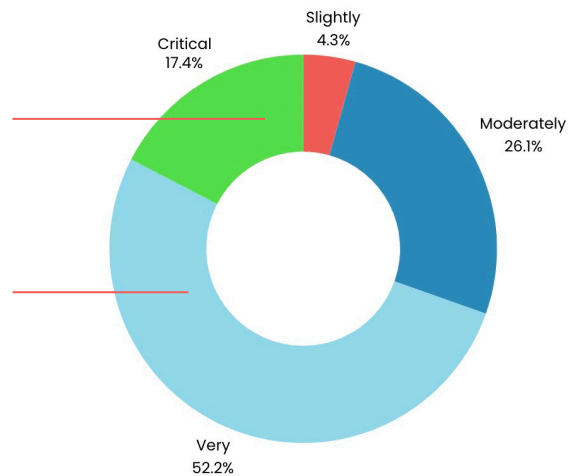


How Beneficial is Doughnut Economics to our Local Economy?

The promise of Doughnut Economics is a thriving local economy. It was great to see that all respondents felt the Doughnut’s benefit was at a scale of 3/5 or more (5 = critically important), yet it could be deduced that 41% don’t yet see how the Nanaimo Doughnut connects to the broader economy and community beyond City-led initiatives and implementation.

How Important is Doughnut Economics / the Nanaimo Framework to how the City Delivers Services?

70% believe Doughnut Economics is very important or critically important to the way the City delivers services. This is a strong indication that the IAP and City Plan have built a solid foundation and shared purpose.



How Important is it for Nanaimo Residents to Understand Doughnut Economics and the City’s Commitment?

Connecting the Nanaimo Framework to City staff personally can help create stronger desire to connect Doughnut Economics into the greater community. Increasing local understanding of Doughnut Economics helps residents appreciate the importance of resilience and adaptability in the face of global and local challenges. This mindset can lead to a more supportive and proactive community ready to tackle issues collaboratively. The Monitoring Framework and related community engagement are key tools in this work.

Where Are We Now: What's Needed?

When asked where they saw gaps or opportunities to reinvigorate their understanding of, and ability to engage with, Doughnut Economics and the Nanaimo Framework we saw the following themes emerge.

Reminder: *the list below is through the lens of what participants felt needs to be in place to feel confident, educated and empowered in their work. This is not reflective of any failure of progress related to the City Plan, IAP or recently released Monitoring Strategy.*

In fact, almost all interviewees commented that the IAP helped transform their work and how they deliver services in partnership with other teams and departments. To most, these cornerstone plans have made work more productive and meaningful.

What was lacking, they felt, was the visible and tangible championing and leadership of Doughnut Economics in a way that kept the Big Vision and purpose at the heart of their decision-making and collaborations.

What They Want ...

1) Leadership and Vision

- A need for a more bold and definitive “WHY” to drive the ongoing commitment over the coming years (we have a decade of work ahead!)
- A call for leaders to display vision and commitment. This helps everyone see how to prioritize, engage, and innovate with the Doughnut.
- Political support; they asked for ongoing commitment from City Council. Understanding that Doughnut Economics was introduced via a member of City Council, this desire for political support from council is likely a request for commitment and consistency in regard to protecting and prioritizing initiatives and decisions that activate and accelerate the Nanaimo Framework. Political support can also come in the form of championing the vision and using consistent language about the City’s commitment to Doughnut Economics.
- “We need to build a network of champions across departments, teams, and the community-at-large.” We heard this from many interviewees and participants so it’s worth noting that people are waiting for an invitation to step up rather than filling a void. Now is the time to foster a culture where no one waits for a champion... they become one if they feel one is needed.

Education and Inspiration

- There was a clear desire for ongoing education and awareness about Doughnut Economics and Nanaimo Framework for staff and partners. In line with priorities in the IAP (#173, 174), igniting a regular educational program is important in the City's efforts to enable people to lead and see themselves in the "why" and the "how."
- More effective storytelling is needed to bring the Doughnut to life through a human versus policy lens.
- "We need to sing from the same song sheet." A desire for common language and shared baseline understanding.

Community Engagement and Support

- "How can we bring the community along?" Or better yet, how do you allow the community to lead?
- "We need ways to invite everyone to see themselves in this work, the process, and the desired outcomes." How might you make it personal?

Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation

- A handful of voices communicated they felt more could be done to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the Nanaimo Framework. What does it look like through an Indigenous view and rooted in local context? How might this make our shared regenerative goals richer?

Strategic Planning and Overcoming Challenges

- "We need a Road Map." How can you make the path to success visible?
- Inter-agency dependency is a challenge. Working with and relying on other government levels and agencies, especially when resources and timelines don't align.

The Compass: Where to From Here?

To accelerate the Nanaimo Framework within the City of Nanaimo and across the community and greater ecosystem, several key pathways could be pursued. From what we heard, three key focus areas emerged to guide the direction.



Vision: Purpose, narrative, leadership, competency

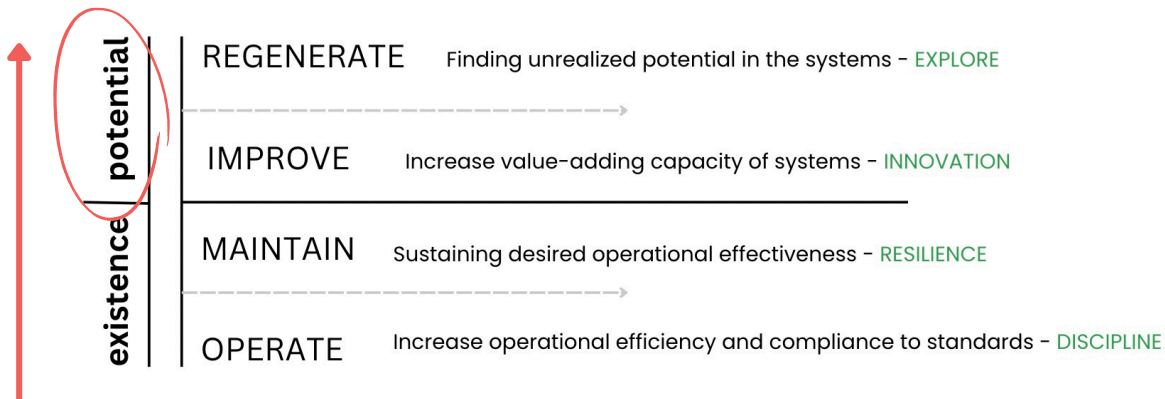
Integration: Relationships and systems

Resilience: Mindset, adaptiveness, and potential

First, empower and accelerate internal efforts by enhancing education and awareness for staff and partners, ensuring alignment and a **shared vision and language**.

This means defining a set of principles about how the grand vision of the Nanaimo Framework is consistently committed to and reinforced in the words and actions of leadership and staff - as well as when collaborating across the ecosystem. Make the vision tangible by **celebrating successes** and telling stories. Leverage stories to build confidence and capacity in the Nanaimo Framework internally. Uncover and share stories of people and projects that demonstrate the spirit of the vision.

Building resilience and tolerance for change is also crucial, as is fostering agility in delivering the City Plan and the Integrated Action Plan (IAP). Stewardship could be reimaged, shifting the City into a system of continuous transformation. Adopt a systems thinking approach to understand and address the interconnections and interdependencies within City departments and beyond. This requires supporting a curiosity **mindset** and asking no small questions; be open to learning and adapting.



Unleash unrealized potential: Cultivate a culture that goes beyond the operations and maintenance of priorities, encouraging investment in innovative work that uncovers new potential. Encourage experimentation and be open to iterative learning, allowing for adjustments based on feedback and new insights.

Additionally, a pivotal shift could be from the City being the primary steward of Doughnut Economics to becoming one of many partners and enablers, facilitating broader community and industry engagement.

Tapping into the **network effect of partners** will be essential to creating a collaborative ecosystem that drives collective progress forward. Fostering a healthy transformation ecosystem is the goal. This includes leveraging the Monitoring Strategy and supporting community-led initiatives that advance the Nanaimo Framework and the Five City Goals.

Mindset Moment: *The beauty of the Doughnut framework lies in its elegant simplicity, underpinned by intricate complexity. In our quest for "efficiency," we often lean towards extractive models that strip away the richness of relationships and interdependencies crucial for a regenerative future.*

Embracing complexity means recognizing the value of these relationships and the capacity they build within our systems. To be effective stewards of Doughnut Economics, organizations must adopt a systems view, integrating diverse touch points and fostering robust interactions. This holistic approach ensures we avoid tunnel vision and cultivate a thriving, interconnected ecosystem capable of driving sustainable change.

Paving the Path. The “Ways”

As discussed in the Circling the Doughnut Workshop in May 2024, we believe that when there is a WAY, there is WILL. The City of Nanaimo started creating “the Way” when the City Plan and IAP were adopted.

As such, the City is perfectly situated to continue to do this, and is already demonstrating strides towards a more regenerative economy with projects like the Circular Economy Accelerator, which showed businesses the WAY while making their own balance sheets more robust as a result. The Accelerator showed a pathway to participate and a pathway to wins. For businesses, it was no-brainer and the local economy did what it should within the Doughnut: it got healthier for associated local industries!

The IAP houses a library of potential City-led policies and actions which are profoundly powerful tools upon which everything else in Nanaimo’s journey towards the promise of the Doughnut. Creating a network effect of impact also means fostering a supportive ecosystem, initiating tangible projects, and taking decisive action that make good on the promise of the Nanaimo Framework, but don’t necessarily have to be tied to City-led projects and programs listed in the IAP. The beauty of the Nanaimo Doughnut means that ecosystem-wide initiatives share the same North Star. The City has tools and mechanisms to lead, and can lift up ecosystem partners to lead / create ‘ways,’ too. Open collaboration and sharing both successes and lessons learned are essential. Leadership plays a pivotal role here – it’s a deliberate choice to lead by example, celebrate successes, and transform setbacks into valuable learning experiences.

Creating the “Way” is ultimately a social experience. It must be made more deep as well as broad and requires constant care and attention through behavioural and social proof-points like: unity (efforts made toward commitment and consistency around vision alignment) and reciprocity (being regenerative in our actions and relationships versus transactional).

Creating the “Way” takes continuous inputs of energy to build momentum towards a critical and sustainable mass. The benefit of investment in this work is that there is a tipping point ... it will become a self-renewing movement and way of being within the City, just like the ambitions of the Doughnut concept.

Creating More “Ways.” Actions to Consider:

- There needs to be dedicated resources that host and steward the infrastructure of key relationships and ambitions.
- Train, empower and unleash a cohort of Nanaimo Doughnut Economics ambassadors or experts to be community and industry resources. They don’t need to be subject matter experts, but they need to serve as integrators and opportunity-identifiers in the ecosystem, helping to connect the dots between challenges, opportunities, connections and resources.
- Create pathways for community and industry involvement, then “get out of the way” and let partners lead where able.
 - Dedicated effort should be made to create market shaping mechanisms that encourage robust market activity within the thriving requirements of the Doughnut without trying to control desirability. Constant thought should be put into how to incentivize and encourage public and private investment in projects that are exemplary of the Doughnut.
 - Leverage established partners to do this with community and industry, allowing the City to focus its efforts on city-led initiatives and services.
 - **Actionable recommendation:** Nanaimo Prosperity Corp. is an ideal partner to be activated as a community convener and business/industry enabler. We recommend partnering or supporting them in creating and delivering accelerator programs, industry expert panels, business playbooks, etc. Collectively hosting events or ‘Doughnut Solutions Labs’ are an effective way of scaling up the ecosystem with support from municipal government.
- Identify and prioritize programs in the IAP that have multiple touch points in the ecosystem (community and industry).

- Provide resources such as funding, technical support, and training to community groups and industries. Industries like fishing and forestry can thrive by returning to their regenerative roots, aligning with Doughnut principles. By focusing on creating these pathways, you enable your community to see the road ahead clearly, fostering the will to move forward together.
- Recognize and reward innovative projects through awards and public acknowledgment (demonstrable storytelling to allow others to see what's possible).
- Explore options to create municipally-controlled organizations to steward development projects in line with the Nanaimo Framework through joint-venture developments. By sharing risk and reward, this mechanism has proven successful in other municipalities around the world. Examples include the Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) and Waterfront Toronto.
- Provide and leverage incentives and subsidies that align to the Nanaimo Framework; partner with pilot projects where able to deliver case studies that are repeatable and scalable.

“ **Industry Interview Reflection:** Future Fit Cities spoke to a local developer who stated they were frustrated at the pace of development approvals. When asked if prioritized approvals for projects that exemplify regenerative principles and involve solar, heat pumps, mass timber, etc., the developer enthusiastically stated that that would be attractive.

Bold vs Incremental: Treating The IAP as a Living Document

While the IAP is reviewed frequently and priorities and timelines are adjusted, a cycle of ongoing review through a BIG QUESTIONS lens may be key to adjusting priorities based on micro and macro influences as well as foundational aspirations that can be tackled in line with the Nanaimo Framework.

Recommended Big Questions to ask when reviewing sections within the IAP:

- How responsive are we to new data, insights, and external pressures?
- How are we identifying and addressing *[insert goal or challenge]*?
- What matters most?
- Are we identifying and addressing any unintended consequences of our actions on the environment and community?
- How flexible are our plans and actions? Are we able to pivot and respond quickly to emerging challenges and opportunities?
- What have we learned from our successes and setbacks? How are we applying these lessons to improve our future actions?
- To what extent are community members involved in the planning, implementation, and review of actions?
- How are we prioritizing actions to ensure the maximum community benefit and return on investment?
- Is responsibility sitting on the right shoulders?
- Are there conditions for success that we need to help put in place?

Mindset Moment: *Mindset matters, and will help to create a comfortable space for big and seemingly uncomfortable questions because the organization evolves from existing (Operate) to exploring potential (Regenerate) as seen on page 7. Make space to question proposed developments, projects, and initiatives that come from within the City and from outside. Does allowing a cruise ship into port align with the Nanaimo Framework? Do parking mandates? Does a proposed new car wash?*

Bringing a mindset to how the city operates and delivers services it isn't so much about interfering in market mechanics but is about creating requirements/incentives that nudge progress in the right direction.

Scaling the Doughnut: Supporting a System of Transformation Within the City

A key goal as communicated by the City of Nanaimo's leadership is to build capacity within the city and to grow a tolerance for uncertainty. After all, the pathway to the City Plan's 25-year goal will not be linear and strategies and tactics will shape-shift in response to local and global trends and conditions. To scale the Doughnut, as mentioned above, requires Vision, Integration, and Resilience.

Build an Internal Champions / Ambassador Network

- Creating a robust network of internal champions and ambassadors is crucial. These individuals, spanning various departments and levels of the organization, can drive the Doughnut Economics agenda from within. Decision makers should be empowered with the knowledge and tools to make informed choices that align with Doughnut principles.
- Ambassadors and champions can act as liaisons between their teams and a Doughnut Economics working group, ensuring alignment and fostering a shared commitment.
- Provide additional support with communications and storytelling, such as internal memos, newsletters and case studies.

Foster a Culture of Continuous Learning and Shared Vision

- Ongoing education and awareness are vital for embedding the Doughnut into the City's ethos. Regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars can help staff understand the complexity and elegance of the Doughnut framework.
- Developing specific vision and language around Doughnut Economics is essential; being explicit about goals and terminology avoids diluting the message and ensures everyone is working towards the same big picture.
- Support candid candour internally. Be willing to allow and entertain big questions that align with - or put at risk - the City's goals.

Audit Actions within the IAP

- Make sure they align with current position and next steps to support resourcing in the upcoming budget. Ensure there is dedicated budget available to support 18 months of activity needed to build routines, relationships and mindset to champion the Nanaimo Doughnut effectively across the organization's work.
- Create a Collective Ambition Compass that highlights shorter term outcomes and pathways guided by principles, experience promises and key competencies (either existing or need to be developed/strengthened).

Develop Systems, Rituals, and a Social Contract

- Establishing systems and rituals that reinforce Doughnut Economics can create a sustainable cultural shift. Small rituals like incorporating "Doughnut moments" into meetings—dedicated times to discuss and reflect on Doughnut principles—can help keep the focus sharp and relevant.
- Encourage questions and challenges during discussions that can stimulate innovation and critical thinking.
- Develop a social contract or city promise around Doughnut Economics that solidifies a collective commitment to these principles, aligning the community and city staff towards common goals (examples are linked on page 16).

Leverage Global Networks and Shared Resources

- Nanaimo should actively connect with other Doughnut Cities to learn from their experiences and share insights. This can be facilitated through regular exchanges, joint projects, and participation in global networks. Bolstering the City's initiatives by tapping into the collective wisdom and resources of these networks can enhance the impact and effectiveness of local efforts. A Doughnut Economics Champion / Ambassador Network (as mentioned above) would be required to do this well.
- Develop materials and tools tailored for City staff that will support ongoing education and practical application of Doughnut Economics, ensuring that the principles are integrated into everyday operations and decision-making processes.

Scaling the Doughnut: Empowering and Enabling Beyond City Staff

Evolving Towards an Ecosystem Approach:

- 1) The City is currently the boundary of the ecosystem with the City Plan, IAP and Monitoring Framework as key tools.
- 2) To create strong foundations for an ecosystem approach, you must first focus on leadership, culture, frameworks, role models, resources and activities inside the City.
- 3) Know your fellow Keystone species and establish an aligned purpose so that disparate ecosystems and partners can begin to nest together in an ecosystem approach.
 - **Definition:** Keystone species are analogous to key organizations or individuals that have a disproportionately large impact on the health, structure, and success of the ecosystem. They help maintain the flow of ideas, resources, and support, ensuring the ecosystem remains dynamic and conducive to innovation.

To activate an ecosystem that advances Doughnut Economics goals, Nanaimo should envision a collaborative network, building on existing relationships and partnerships, and guided by a shared goal. Engagement with civic partners, such as economic development, tourism, educational institutions, industry, developers, businesses, innovation groups, and the community is key.

Economic development organizations like Nanaimo Prosperity Corp. can facilitate connections between local businesses and emerging opportunities, encouraging investments in sustainable and regenerative industries. Industry participation could be supported and encouraged with tools such as the [Doughnut for Urban Development Playbook](#) or industry learning opportunities and challenges/accelerators

Educational institutions, from K-12 schools to universities, can integrate Doughnut Economics into their curricula, fostering a culture of sustainability and innovation from a young age. Businesses can adopt and promote sustainable practices, serving as role models within the community, while innovation partners like Innovation Island can provide space for creative solutions to flourish.

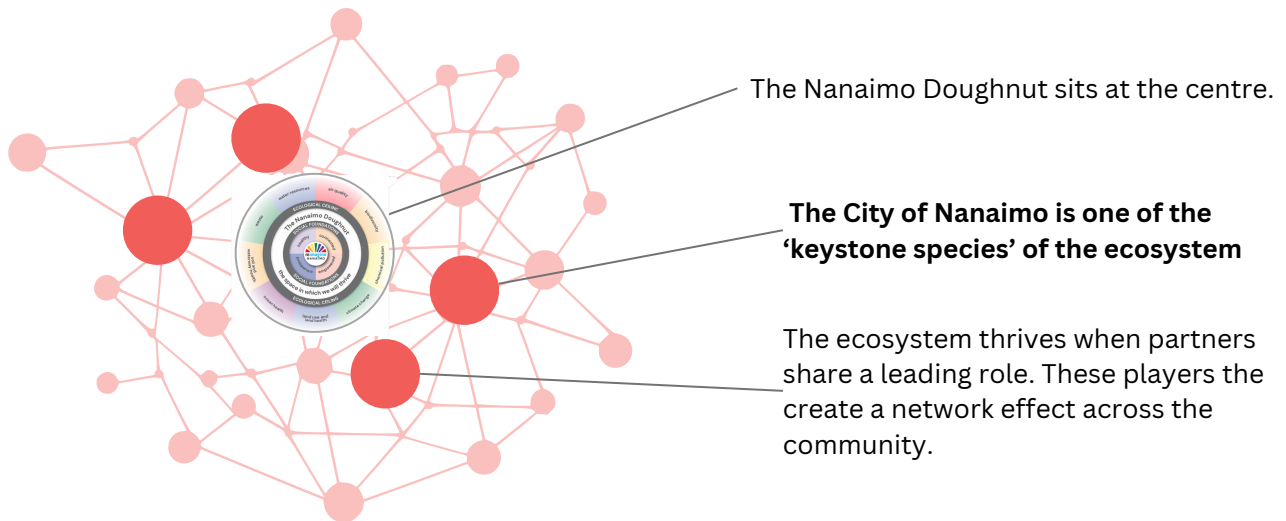
Creating platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration such as workshops, innovation challenges, and public forums, can ensure continuous engagement and shared learning.

A) Approximated Current State (for example's sake):

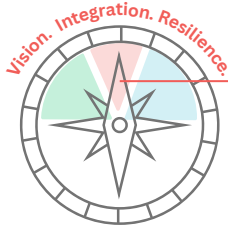


B) Potential Future State (the Ecosystem)

Nesting ecosystems together:



18-Month Road Map



- **Vision:** Purpose, narrative, leadership, competency
- **Integration:** Relationships and systems
- **Resilience:** Mindset, adaptiveness, and potential

1-4 months: New Foundations

- • **Identify Internal Champions and Ambassadors:** Select individuals across various departments to form an internal core team of Doughnut Economics champions.
- • **Develop a refreshed vision and purpose** statement to guide City work and principles of partnerships.
 - Our “Why” (purpose)
 - How we demonstrate our commitment (mindset and culture)
 - How we talk about it (shared key messaging)
 - How we act (principles around internal and external partnerships)
- ● ● • **Create a Collective Ambition Compass** that highlights shorter term outcomes and pathways guided by principles, experience promises and key competencies (either existing or need to be developed/strengthened) as an important orienting step.
- ● • **IAP Actions Audit:** Make sure they align with current position and next steps to support resourcing in the upcoming budget.
 - Scenario Planning: Introduce scenario planning exercises to prepare for and adapt to future uncertainties and changes.
 - Assess and adjust resource allocation to ensure flexibility and responsiveness in advancing Doughnut goals.
- • **Internal Communications Strategy:** Implement a communications plan that includes storytelling, newsletters, and internal success stories to keep Doughnut Economics and the Nanaimo Framework visible and engaging. Leverage and celebrate the Monitoring Strategy.

- ● ● • **Create a Social Contract:** Develop and promote a social contract or city promise around Doughnut Economics / the Nanaimo Framework to ensure collective guiding principles and actions. This is a moment to shift to an distributed network / ecosystem model.
 - London Living: A New Social Contract ([Link](#))
 - Rainforest Alberta: Innovation Ecosystem Social Contract ([Link](#))
- ● • **Launch Monitoring Strategy Community Engagement**
- • **Discovery Session:** Engage Civic Partners / Keystone Species and Champions.
 - Hold exploration sessions with key partners such as economic development organizations, educational institutions, and industry groups to discuss collaborative goals and opportunities.

4-8 months: Building More Capacity

- • **Kick-Off Regular Education & Awareness Sessions:** to deepen understanding and application of Doughnut principles and the Nanaimo Framework across City departments and functions. Set up regular knowledge-sharing sessions where staff can present case studies, successes, and lessons learned.
- ● • **Internal Rituals and Routines to Support Mindset / Culture:** For example: Doughnut Moments in Meetings; Introduce dedicated times in meetings for discussing Doughnut principles and progress.
- • **Engage Civic Partners / Keystone Species and Champions:**
 - Begin to explore how the City could enable key partners to ‘take the baton’ and become community-facing champions and accelerants.
 - Map and seed the ecosystem (identify relationships, influence, resources) in support of collaborative goals.
- ● • **Support Joint Initiatives & Economic Development Collaboration:** Work with economic development organizations like Nanaimo Prosperity Corp. and the RDN to connect local businesses with sustainable and regenerative opportunities.
 - Launch initial collaborative projects, focusing on shared goals and mutual benefits.
 - Explore industry panels, workshops, and resources such as Playbooks
 - Consider a Doughnut Design Lab or innovation hub
- • **Resource and Knowledge Sharing:** Create a shared resource platform for exchanging best practices, tools, and materials related to Doughnut Economics and the Nanaimo Framework.
 - For example, develop and distribute a playbook for developers and industry groups to encourage sustainable urban development practices. Review and analyze incentives and other mechanisms such as policy.

8-12 months: Expand Network, More Potential

- ● • **Activate Global Network Connections:** Begin reaching out to other Doughnut Cities to establish communication channels and explore potential collaborations and exchanges. Note this does not only have to be among city leadership and staff; exchanges and collaborations should also be fostered between industry leaders.
- ● • **Expand Local and Regional Network and Broaden Ecosystem Engagement:** Actively seek new partnerships and expand the network to include more diverse stakeholders.
- ● ● • **Annual Nanaimo Doughnut Days / Summit:** Organize an annual summit to bring together the ecosystem, share progress, and plan future actions.

12-18 months: Assess, Adapt, Evolve

- ● ● • **Broaden Community Engagement re: City-led Initiatives (City Plan):** Establish regular public forums to discuss progress, gather community feedback, and adapt strategies based on local and global trends.
- • **Annual Resilience Audit:** Conduct an annual audit to evaluate organizational resilience around the Nanaimo Framework, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- ● • **Update Materials:** Revise and expand internal materials based on feedback and evolving best practices to ensure continuous improvement.