

## **Transition Sooke's OCP and Climate Group, Dialog Consulting, District of Sooke Meeting and Follow-Up**

On October 28, 2020, several members of the OCP-Climate Emergency subcommittee met via Zoom with Dialog, the consultant managing the OCP public engagement, to gain clarity about the process and receive some response to Transition Sooke's concerns that the OCP process is not addressing the impacts of climate change directly, and may not result in effective responses to the need for climate adaptation and mitigation.

This document includes a summary of the points covered in our meeting, as well as a follow-up document we created afterward.

### **Summary of Meeting**

In attendance were Alan Dolan, Susan Belford, Diane Bernard and Jo Phillips of Transition Sooke, Matthew Pawlow and Katherine Lesyshen of District of Sooke (DOS) and Emily Rennalls, Lucas Ozois-Mongeau and Jennifer Fix of Dialog.

Jennifer Fix led off the meeting assuring us that Dialog's approach is "wholly informed by climate change."

*Engagement Process:* We noted that materials did not prompt for climate change or growth. This was discussed at length and Dialog acknowledged they have changed their materials and approach to the Community Sounding Boards, running from October 27 – November 5, 2020, based on our feedback. However, when looking at the sounding boards, it is hard to see any prompting for climate change as it is not mentioned directly.

*OCP document:* Council's need (articulated at Council meeting Oct 26, 2020) for a definition of "climate emergency lens" or "green lens" was discussed and came up in various ways. District of Sooke head planner used the term "triple-bottom line" which is a term that was popular 10 or 20 years ago but has fallen from use. TS's Diane Bernard challenged Pawlow on this term and the problem with thinking that one has to make trade-offs between environment, community and economy.

*How will the GHG targets be set? And how will the plan for meeting the GHG targets in the OCP be developed?* While at times we were sort of "talking past" each other, we did get some answers:

- a) In the OCP not only the targets are listed, but also the means that will be used to achieve the targets
- b) Understanding that the end state is carbon neutrality by 2030, it will be important to also understand the impact of GHG policies on the community. An established energy emissions reductions model will be used to assess community emissions. Geo-spatial analysis will also be used.
- c) A monitoring metric and evaluation plan with clear indicators will be needed as well.

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*Lack of climate emergency language in messaging.* The point was made by TS members that the language used throughout the process and document is critical to ensuring climate relevant results. We noted that the Climate Emergency is a key concept. Dialog noted that the format chosen in the preliminary survey was trying to get at peoples' lived experiences.

*Growth:* We asked if the OCP could include a 0% or very-low-growth scenario? Response was "yes, if that's the what we hear from the community" Growth options will be based on priorities from the community.

*Is climate change a true section of the OCP? Reflected throughout? Is it part of the vision?*

Response to this was "Climate is the lens for everything — it is inherent to good planning principles." Elements of climate discussion that are outside municipal authority may be in an appendix because legally the OCP can only focus on things within municipal authority. We have been hearing that climate is a priority and so it will not be excluded. It may run through the plan and have its own section. Dialog is working with the Sustainable Solutions Group that will provide an opportunity to tie climate impact and action to different growth scenarios. If high growth—OCP needs to explain how such growth can be achieved, within the targets. This was where our head planner cautioned that there may be trade-offs between economy and the environment. It was also noted by Jo that we need to focus beyond GHGs into loss of habitat and trees, ecosystems.

### **Written Follow-Up to Meeting**

Many of the things we had hoped to talk to Dialog about did not happen, so on November 2, 2020 the following follow-up information was sent to Dialog:

#### **1. Engagement process**

- a) Visioning exercise
  - i. Needed to be questions that really get to the nub of what people's vision for Sooke is (statements that people responded to on an agree-disagree Likert scale might have worked)
  - ii. No ability to leave and return from the Metroquest visioning tool
- b) Draft OCP – when will it be released?
  - iii. What is the nature of consultation on the document going to look like?
  - iv. Will the document include a roll-up of "what you heard," and how and why it was or was not incorporated into the draft OCP?
- c) How are you reaching people who are in so-called (developer-called) affordable housing or people who are living unhappily in some of the new developments?

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- d) How are you reaching poor people and disabled people for their input?
- e) Indigenous consultation – Although the municipal duty to consult is not the law, many local governments are conducting government-to-government consultations with First Nations, for a variety of reasons — building relationships, building trust, exploring co-management opportunities, etc. Is any of that sort of consultation planned?

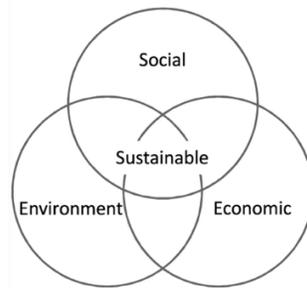
### 2. OCP document

- a) 2010 OCP did it work? Was language appropriate?
- b) Language in the Paris agreement and in Sooke's climate emergency motion— net emissions, carbon neutrality — is inappropriate and business as usual. We need to talk about zero GHG emissions.
- c) This is a land-use plan – how will it address carbon sequestration, adaptation and mitigation?

To reinforce some of the conversations at our meeting:

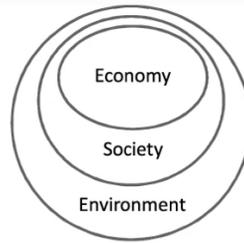
### 3. Climate First and Sustainability

Despite references in a recent Sooke Council meeting, the triple-bottom line approach to sustainability has fallen seriously out of favour. The notion that actions and policies in the OCP represent “trade-offs” between environment, economy and community is not appropriate, especially when the environmental threat is the Climate Emergency. The classic model of sustainability, which aligns with the triple-bottom line approach is the three intersecting circles:



Whereas a more modern approach, and one that is consistent with a “climate-first” approach is as follows:

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#### 4. **Local Government Act**

Revisions in 2019 to the Local Government Act do not seem to have been captured in Sooke's RFP and Dialog's proposal. The revisions say, "An official community plan must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and **policies and actions** of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets" (Part 14, Division 4, Section 473). We believe this is a very critical part of the OCP and represents an opportunity for Sooke, with the assistance of Dialog, to break new ground regarding the interpretation and application of the changes to the Local Government Act to the OCP and land-use planning exercises.

#### 5. **Final thoughts**

If we are going to engage people in the environment/climate/growth aspect of the OCP process we need to consider what might motivate them. It seems like lots of people in Sooke are concerned about the loss and potential loss of ecosystems in our area and the loss of that small-town feel (fear that we will become Langford). They are concerned about persistent clear-cut logging, bulldozing of hillsides, removal of old trees on properties as they are being developed, destruction of fish-bearing streams, dumping garbage in remote forested areas, loss of agricultural land and the potential pollution of our pristine ocean and shores.

While it is always good to mention climate emergency and GHG emissions, perhaps Dialog needs to ask people more about these other specific concerns (and any more we can think of or they can think of) and encourage residents to voice their feelings and thoughts about each of them as they participate in the OCP engagement process.