



Scenario D: Low Carbon/Low Growth

Growth scenarios and the future

The critical question is not where we grow; it is how much we grow.

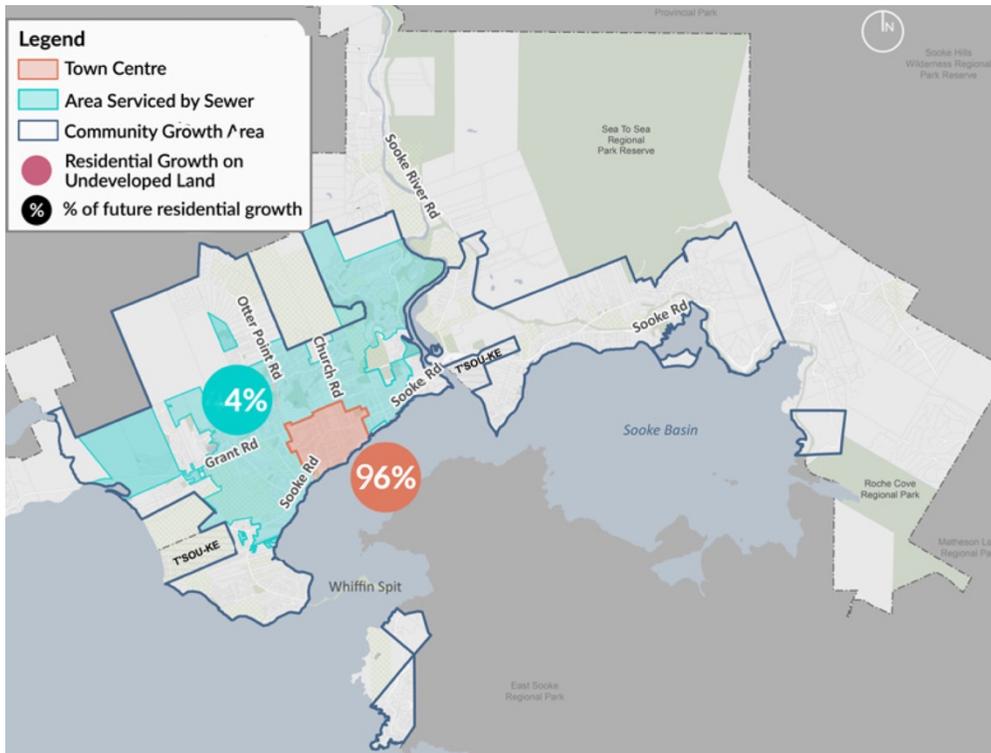
The global scientific community has advised that we must cut our greenhouse gas emissions if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change. In 2019, the District of Sooke declared a climate emergency, including that Sooke aspire to be carbon neutral by 2030. If Sooke is to reach that goal, we need to drastically reduce the growth in our population.

The growth scenarios (Scenarios A – C) proposed by Dialog in the Official Community Plan (OCP) engagement process assume that Sooke would double its population to 25,000 residents in the next 30 years. Transition Sooke has estimated that the increase in local greenhouse gas emissions and loss of carbon sink arising from that rate of residential growth would set us back seriously from meeting our climate emergency goal.

With the climate emergency in mind, Transition Sooke is proposing a fourth Scenario D, a much more sustainable and liveable scenario based on “low carbon/low growth” and a future that protects the citizens of Sooke and does not mortgage the future of the younger generation. Scenario D allows for overall low growth, confined mostly to the town centre, and focuses on building the local economy and providing non-market, affordable housing.

The positive co-benefits of a major decrease in growth rate include not only addressing our climate change goal by preventing the increase in greenhouse gases and protecting our carbon sinks, but also protecting what Sooke residents say they love most about their community:

- Small town feel
- Nearby greenspaces and trails for recreation and play
- Access to the waterfront
- Value of the natural landscape
- Vibrant local economy
- Reduced vehicle congestion



The overall population growth in Scenario D is proposed to be very low (0.5% or less). The percentages on the map refer to the areas where that growth would occur. Hence most of the growth would be in the town centre area — primarily affordable housing, local businesses and public parkland.

How growth is allocated

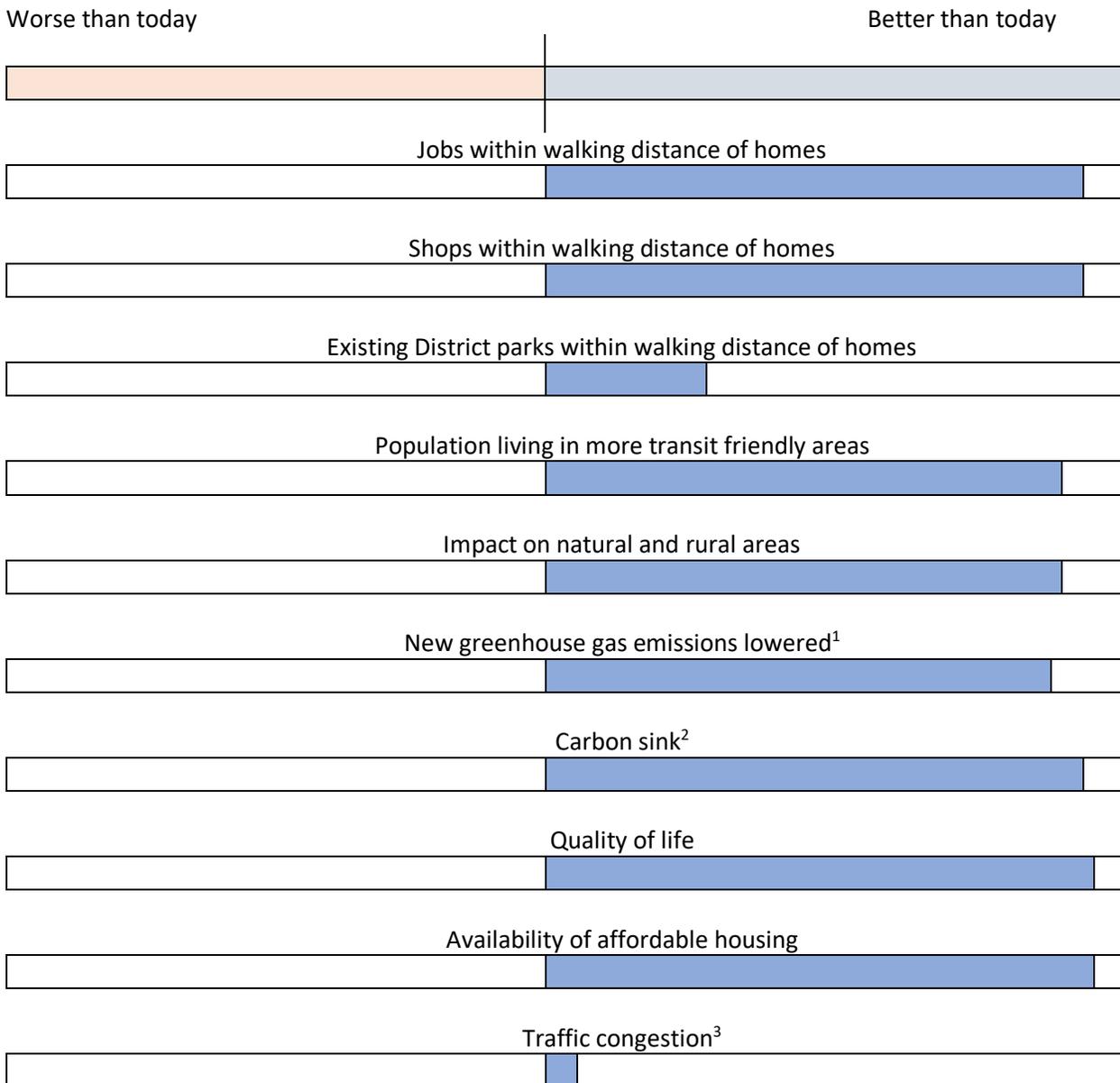
The overall rate of growth would be reduced considerably and allocated as follows:

4% - Very small residential developments outside the Town Centre in areas serviced by sewers and on undeveloped land, with minimal disruption to soils and forest cover; no new large residential developments outside the Town Centre.

96% - Town Centre consists of a combination of subsidized, affordable, zero-energy housing as well as space for small, locally based, independent commercial businesses (shops, cafés, etc.) and possible “co-operative” space for small businesses that cannot afford the rents of a larger office space. Parkland and access to the ocean for all.

How the scenario performs

(Note: Dialog developed bar graphs using GIS mapping data; Transition Sooke did not have access to that data so these graphs were approximated using a qualitative, relative approach.)



1. Growth in the development of new houses would be considerably less and would focus on subsidized, affordable housing and new local businesses that would employ zero-energy building techniques.
2. Carbon sinks would no longer be destroyed by development. A bylaw protecting trees on private and public land would need to be passed.
3. Traffic congestion would be about the same as today but with reduced growth and implementation of Sooke's Transportation Master Plan and BC Transit's Local Area Plan, it would improve over time.