



To Grow or Not to Grow: Developing a Liveable Sooke in a Climate Emergency

TOWNHALL PROCEEDINGS

June 26, 2021

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Transition Sooke is a citizen-based, volunteer, public-interest group focused on co-creating a sustainable, resilient, and secure community that meets the challenges of the climate emergency in the Sooke region.

This June 26 town hall was a forum for thoughts about growth in Sooke. It's the topic of daily conversation in Sooke, from the clogged roads to the rapid disappearance of the small town and diminishing forests. You'll often hear people saying they don't want Sooke to become Langford. But what people in Sooke want and what is happening are two quite different things.

While Sooke braces for 10 more years of growth, 10 years is also the timeframe for reducing carbon emissions. The federal and provincial governments have set targets to cut carbon emissions and expect municipalities to likewise set targets and meet them. For municipalities, the major emitters are vehicles and buildings. If Sooke is rapidly adding buildings and vehicles, Sooke is also rapidly adding carbon emissions to the task.

Transition Sooke is interested in this challenge, so we decided to talk to people on the street and we made a short video of the answers to a few questions. We also decided to hold this virtual town hall where people could think outside the box of "growth is inevitable."

In early September, we will be holding a second town hall with a panel of guest speakers, to further explore ideas and questions raised at today's event.

Susan Clarke

THE EVENT

To Grow or not to Grow was held online and began promptly at 10 am. 69 people had registered, and 39 logged in a few minutes early. Five people registered last minute and so joined the meeting a little late.

Elder Shirley Alphonse, spiritual healer of the T'Sou-ke Nation, opened the meeting with a prayer which grounded participants in this territory's abundance and reminded us of its living, breathing whole.

Next, we watched *Growing Pains*, an 8-minute video that records the thoughts of nine Sooke residents who agreed to answer four questions about their neighbourhood, growth, protection of natural assets and climate change. The four questions were:

1. Do you think Sooke should keep growing or slow down its population growth?
2. What do you like about the neighbourhood where you live in Sooke? What don't you like?
3. Do you think we can achieve reductions in fossil-fuel emissions, while at the same time increase the number of buildings and vehicles in Sooke?
4. Do you think the District of Sooke should protect undeveloped land and waterfront? How important is this to you?

To view this video, go to: <https://youtu.be/4rc-UVMuMOU>.

The video was followed by facilitated 30-minute break-out sessions that probed reactions to the video and the questions:

- *How do you feel about growth in Sooke?*
- *What should Sooke do about growth?*

A plenary followed in which the facilitator/note-taker for each of the small groups reported back the highlights of their group's discussions. After the small groups reported, two short presentations were given linking growth to increased emissions and climate change. The first outlined the carbon emissions associated with new construction and the second was an impassioned plea for reduction of GHGs. This was followed by a Q&A and an information-sharing session.

THEMES

During the town hall, a wealth of information, resources, ideas, and suggestions for action were expressed. These ideas arose from a combination of the Chat function in Zoom, the small breakout groups, as well as presentations and comments during the plenary. Table 1 below summarizes those ideas by theme. The section after the table presents a more detailed account of the themes.

Values and Desires	Protection of nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specifics: parks and pathways Pro-local economic development Indigenous land concerns
Growth	Examples of no or low growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campbell River District • Nelson • Metchosin Growth's dangerous impacts GHG impacts of population growth Inevitability of Growth
Issues	Building Step Code and affordability Draft OCP has no concrete plan to reduce GHGs Forest cutting GHGs Lack of connectivity Recycling access Traffic congestion Lack of Information
Solutions	Education Funding Solar and wind Youth engagement Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways (in Parks and Trails Master Plan) • Bus Plan (implementation post pandemic) The Climate Action Committee's Data Group will be presenting a set of tangible 7% solution goals and ideas at the Committee of the Whole meeting July 19 Climate friendly practices mandated for any new development. Tree Planting and Forest Protection Retrofits (replace oil and gas with heat pumps) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CleanBC Community Energy Coach

<p>Taking Action</p>	<p>Actions to be taken by Sooke Council</p> <p>Communication Needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On how citizens can input to Municipal processes. • To help individuals plan their changes; support for individuals to make personal change <p>Before next townhall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of us to contribute to build an online info resource library • Everyone start living at zero GHG footprint <p>See the list of resources at the end of this document.</p>
<p>Content for Townhall 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For more discussion next time: earth jurisprudence and the rights of nature • Expanded PowerPoint on GHGs and new development: Illustrating scenarios that will result in the needed 7 per cent annual decrease. • Impacts of Te’Mexw Treaty on DoS land use by-laws. • Zero carbon building • How do we move these ideas into a regulation or bylaw with teeth so they will happen • Success story in another community. e.g., Nelson. Where a community has been successful in reducing its GHG emissions. • Articulate the scale of the task at hand. • Education, education, education — it’s not that people don’t care; it’s that they don’t know • Need to know where to find information — improve efficiency, add renewable energy, and reduce GHGs in your home. As an individual what can I do better? Especially low cost. • Engage the youth

Values and Desires

Protection of Nature

Throughout both the small group discussions and chat there was a strong current that nature is slowly being chipped away by development. People noted it is vital to “preserve what we have” and maintain the natural environment. As one person put it, “What we are doing now is not sustainable. The anxieties and realities of climate change are not taken seriously, even though civilisation is at risk.” Another referenced experiencing disorientation when travelling on Sooke Road (Highway 14), saying “I can’t tell where I am and where I turn—it’s unrecognizable.”

In addition to the sense that the rural nature of Sooke is important and is disappearing (“it’s not what it used to be”) there is also a sense by newcomers that Sooke is not what they expected; participants referenced the Broomhill development and others where residents have tiny yards and no park within walking distance, while others lamented the need to get into the car just to walk in a park or on the beach. A hunger was expressed for wildlife corridors and small natural intact ecosystems that would provide habitat for local flora and fauna in which people can walk. The point was made that while Sooke borders plentiful provincial and CRD parkland, it does not own much municipal land; further, much of what looks like forest now is in fact privately owned and may become available for logging or development.

- *Specifics such as parks, pathways and waterfront* were discussed. It was noted that last fall the District of Sooke passed Master Plans for both Parks and Trails and Transportation, which should ease the impacts of car-oriented, in-Sooke transportation to some degree. It was noted that locating funding for the implementation of these plans remains an ongoing effort of District staff. One person noted that there is a Parks Fund set aside for parks and parks acquisition and changes to Development Cost Charges may increase that fund.
- *Pro-local economic development* was suggested as a tool to promote the protection of nature, both through expanding opportunities for local and locally owned and operated businesses of all types to reduce transportation emissions, as well as encouraging climate-positive businesses, such as retrofitting companies, solar and wind companies, companies using natural building materials, habitat restoration companies and so on.

Indigenous Land Concerns

Discussion in the chat noted that the rights of T’Sou-ke Nation to use the land for traditional harvest and hunting are impeded by the constant development of land, and that this could become a treaty issue. For this reason, it was argued that District of Sooke council needs to be including this matter in its land-use decisions.

A response explained that the District of Sooke updated its Memorandum of Understanding with the T’Sou-ke First Nation recently and that the Mayor and Chief Planes meet on a regular basis with a goal of respectful government-to-government relations to the benefit of the District and T’Sou-ke together. Discussions with the T’Sou-ke were held during the drafting of the Official Community Plan (OCP) as part of the engagement process. While it was reported that Mayor Tait is also chair of the CRD’s First Nations Relations Committee, it wasn’t clear if discussions between District of Sooke and T’Sou-ke Nation have explored the impact of land and treaty rights on municipal land use—for example, the potential of achieving these lands in an intact condition.

Growth

Many participants echoed the general sense that growth is inevitable. “Growth is hard to stop; money talks” said one, while another noted that “the things people want require growth.” The idea of positives and negatives associated with growth was referenced, but not explored in depth. Most participants seemed to agree that Sooke has a problem with growth, but there was less agreement about just what the problem is.

Some felt that Sooke needs a model to manage growth, rather than simply managing the consequences of piecemeal, unmanaged growth. Others stressed that “it’s not about growth per se, it’s HOW we grow” in as green a way as possible. These folks would say that Sooke needs a development model that is sensitive to the environment. Still others suggested that it is the unchecked nature of the growth that is the problem, and that the solution is to slow growth now to take stock of the situation and plan how to go forward.

It was clear to many that increased population will increase GHG emissions for housing and transportation. It was therefore suggested that distinguishing between economic growth and population (housing) growth can help us grow resiliency in Sooke. The municipality could grow and diversify its local economy without growing the population or increasing GHG emissions. It was noted that if growth doesn’t occur in Sooke it will happen elsewhere (East Sooke, Otter Point, Shirley)

Some participants noted that allowing limited development in the downtown core of Sooke, particularly if it is affordable, might be alright going forward but the large developments on the mountains, such as Sun River, stretching away into the hills are no longer the way to go.

As a way of controlling growth and ensuring the protection of nature, it was suggested that DoS explore the creation of a Local Development Corporation. This would be a private, not-for-profit corporation created by the municipality for development purposes.

It was noted that there are several BC examples of municipalities that have embraced a no- or low-growth approach. These include Campbell River District, Nelson, Metchosin and Highlands, and that District of Sooke may be able to learn from them.

Issues

Several specific issues were raised throughout the town hall:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs). Participants saw that increasing housing will increase greenhouse gas emissions at a time when Sooke must reduce them. While some wondered why tiny Sooke should

concern itself with emission reduction, others pointed out that all jurisdictions, including tiny towns like ours, have a role to play in combatting climate change.

Inclusion of GHG reduction in Official Community Plan. While the current draft OCP does reference targeted reductions of GHG emissions, it does not currently contain a plan to meet the target. This was thought to be a serious oversight. As one person said: the OCP needs to include the GHG emission numbers and what the yearly goals are and how we are going to meet those goals.

Council has adopted the District of Sooke Climate Action Committee recommended yearly reduction of 7% of GHGs, which equals 3,765 tCO_{2e} per year. While participants expressed that this is a solid achievement, they stressed that it is vital to have a map to making this happen; an implementation timetable that outlines specific actions and policies to be taken by the district. Evaluation must be built into the plan.

Cost of Climate measures. It was noted that building with natural materials and other climate measures may make housing in Sooke even more unaffordable. However, others noted that programs exist that could separate climate mitigation measures from the real estate calculation. An example of this is Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, which building owners and developers can use to upgrade their building's energy performance, install renewable energy systems, and reduce resource consumption with no money down and with the financing repaid through property taxes. Such a program is active in Alberta, and \$2 million for the Property Assessment Clean Energy financing tool is being allocated by the BC government to help more people and businesses conserve energy.

Forest Cutting. There were many expressions of dismay about de-forestation, especially with respect to large scale development techniques that include extractive measures like clear-cutting and quarrying as part of site preparation, resulting in widespread habitat destruction. During the Dec 7, 2020, District of Sooke Committee of the Whole, Council voted to receive a Tree Management report and direct staff to develop a purpose-based engagement strategy for tree management. The status of this purpose-based engagement strategy is unknown, and tree protection remains unresolved.

Traffic Congestion. Participants noted that living in Sooke requires a car to get most places. Not only is bus service limited and infrequent, but also a lack of connection between municipal roads means that getting anywhere often requires using Sooke road (Hwy 14). This increases distances so that walking and cycling are chosen less often than driving; this, combined with increasing numbers of Sooke residents who commute by car to Langford and Victoria results in traffic congestion on Hwy 14, and many local trips being taken unnecessarily by car, driving up GHG emissions. Walkability and bike ability in the district need to be rapidly improved, as walking to catch a bus in Sooke can be a dangerous undertaking on the narrow, sidewalk-less roads.

It was noted that the District of Sooke Parks and Trails and Transportation Master plans hold remedies for most of these problems and need to be acted on promptly. However, they await funding and action by other agencies before full implementation can occur. For example, Sooke's Transportation Master plan hinges on the BC Transit Sooke Local Area Plan to be implemented in January 2022:

<https://www.bctransit.com/documents/1529710177752>

Lack of Information. Many participants indicated they lack information about two major areas:

- What they should do in their own lives as individuals to take climate action, and
- How to interact with the District on these matters. Lack of awareness on development processes, bylaws, permits, etc. make it challenging.

Solutions

The town hall generated many solutions that residents, Transition Sooke and the District of Sooke could undertake:

Education: A lot of people really want to know what solutions are, what to do, where to get information, and where to get help. Both District of Sooke and organizations such as Transition Sooke could make more information available about what each resident needs to do to contribute to GHG reduction. This could include explanations of simple GHG reducing actions, links to carbon budgeting calculators, links to retrofitting funding and resources. Perhaps using the service of a CleanBC Community Energy coach at the municipal level could be useful. Some resources are listed at the end of this document.

Solar, wind, and other alternatives: It was felt that Sooke could benefit from greater use of both Solar and Wind power as alternatives. Participants wanted to see District of Sooke disallow gas heating infrastructure in any new developments, to support residents to make retrofits away from fossil fuels, including heat-pumps, solar or wind, and to mandate climate friendly practices for any new development. Climate-positive practices should be enshrined in all land use bylaws and regulations.

Participants wanted to see government support at all levels, including the municipal, to make it easier for individuals and businesses to make use of alternative energy sources. More funding, better communication, and mandating the use of alternative energy, insulation, no carbon building materials through policy were seen as desirable. Although the District Hall uses a heat pump for temperature control, it was suggested that Council augment this for electricity by installing solar panels.

Transportation: Participants encouraged District of Sooke to fast-track the full implementation of the Parks and Trails Master Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

Tree Planting, Forest, and Waterfront Protection: It was suggested that green spaces should be mandated to include iconic species like Douglas-Fir and Western Redcedar as well as deciduous trees that are more resistant to wildfire. The GHG storage of relative species should be considered in this as well.

Participants indicated that assurance is needed from the District that Sooke's unique forested and waterfront environments will be protected. District of Sooke is encouraged to create a reserve fund for buying land that holds important environmental assets or habitat and placing covenants and restrictions on land. It was suggested that public appetite for such initiatives could be assessed through a referendum asking the community if they would be in favour of a levy to collect money for a District land purchasing fund.

Support is needed for effective invasive species removal programs and environmental restoration. Some conversation considered what would happen if everyone planted one tree on their property; it was noted that while this is a worthy endeavor, mitigation of our carbon footprint would need us to plant something like a thousand or more trees each. This led to a consensus that there must be more effort made to keep forests intact.

Economic Change: Several participants noted that we need to look at our economy in a different way; as something that fits within community life rather than something separate. Many ways of enhancing the local economy were discussed and overwhelmingly the solution people settled on was to increase residents' ability to work in Sooke; not only by creating more opportunities for live/work accommodation, but also through creation of co-working space and office-industrial space. Further, municipal land-use policies could encourage commercial space sizing to encourage local and locally owned businesses rather than big box chains. Such pro-local economic responses were seen as potentially having positive impacts on nature, and community wellbeing as well as economic development.

It was noted that many Sooke residents, including youth, would like to see more fast-food outlets and some big box stores, such as Walmart or Canadian Tire here; support for this idea was mixed, but it was acknowledged that youth want to be able to shop and hang out in their community.

It was noted that the draft OCP recommends the creation of "a \$50,000 reserve fund to be used for sustainable economic development initiatives in the context of an Economic Development Corporation". (Policy 3.4.3.3. of the draft OCP). This reserve fund is for establishment of a committee to attract investors and innovation to Sooke, "To attract new businesses that are Low Carbon Resilient. Definition of Low Carbon Resilient businesses are those that, to the greatest extent possible:

- Contribute to a circular economy.
- Protect natural resources and sinks.
- Provide protection from climate risks.
- Do not increase GHG emissions or compensate for their GHG emissions.
- Identify social, environmental, and economic co-benefits as part of the business vision.

Youth Engagement: It was noted that youth involvement is key to making change for the long term. For example, young elementary students have started Eco Clubs in the local area. It was also noted that Girl Guides, Pathfinders, and the ECO Academy at Edward Milne Community School are highly active.

Use “Green Lens”: The Low Carbon Resilient approach being taken by DoS is a good start. Sustainable Development Strategy provides a blueprint for where we can go in future. The Climate Action Committee is developing the framework for a Climate Action Plan along with a “7% Solution” scenario focused on GHG reduction in buildings and transportation. <https://sooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/plans/Sooke-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf>

The Climate Action Committee’s Data Group will be presenting a set of tangible 7% solution goals and ideas at the Committee of the Whole meeting July 19, 2021. To view or participate in this meeting, contact corp@sooke.ca.

Replace Oil and Gas for heating homes: Several participants noted that replacing oil and gas furnaces will take a big chunk out of GHGs. The CleanBC Community Energy Coach can help communities get the information out and help residents navigate all the rebates available for heat pumps, solar, etc.

Assure water security: enable rainwater harvesting, protect the health of lakes, ponds, streams, and waterfront.

Taking Action

Actions suggested for Sooke Council and staff:

- Build on excellent web communication systems to increase transparency about how citizens can give input to council decisions.
- Increase information about Sooke’s GHG reduction goals and how individual residents can meaningfully participate.
- Provide financial support, through Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, to enable individuals to make needed GHG reducing changes to their homes.
- Enact an integrated pest management by-law to end the use of pesticides.
- Plan for and achieve a 7% reduction in carbon emissions.
- Create an implementation timetable for GHG reduction that outlines specific actions and policies to be taken by the District. Evaluation must be built into the plan.
- Consider a Community Controlled Development Corporation

Actions suggested for Community organizations such as Transition Sooke.

- Increase “how to” videos about reducing GHG emissions to help individuals plan their changes.

Content for Town Hall 2

Participants listed several topics they hoped would be covered in Town Hall 2. Desire was expressed that the next town hall will provide some direction on a way forward for Sooke, in terms of implementation of ideas, and expanding awareness of potential solutions. A desire for discussion on further ways of mobilizing individual action was expressed, as was a desire for discussion that would deepen awareness of alternative views of nature and land-use.

- For more discussion next time: earth jurisprudence and the rights of nature
- Expanded PowerPoint on GHGs and new development: Illustrating scenarios that will result in the needed 7 per cent annual decrease.
- Impacts of Te'Mexw Treaty on DoS land use by-laws.
- Zero carbon building
- How do we move these ideas into a regulation or bylaw with teeth so they will happen?
- Success story in another community. e.g., Nelson. Where a community has been successful in reducing its GHG emissions.
- Articulate the scale of the task at hand.
- Education, education, education — it's not that people don't care; it's that they don't know.
- Need to know where to find information — improve efficiency, add renewable energy, and reduce GHGs in your home. As an individual what can I do better? Especially low cost.
- Engage the youth.

MOVING FORWARD

It is hoped that the *To Grow or Not to Grow* Townhalls will help citizens of Sooke and the District Council to confront, address and respond effectively and in a timely way to the climate dangers confronting them, and act now to build resilience for the future.

APPENDICES

Resources

Total Annual Carbon Cost of a Development

GHG Remarks

Small-group notes

Chat summary

Results of Participant Survey

RESOURCES

The chat provided a wealth of resources and links:

BetterHomesBC.ca can do a free virtual home assessment with you to advise you on where you can make energy improvements.

The Transition Sooke Green Energy Team of Transition Sooke has handouts that we can share with everyone on what individuals can do that is organized by “no cost”, “low cost” and “higher cost”, Contact lilymahsen@telus.net.

The Canadian Rural Revitalisation foundation

Draft OCP in full: <https://sooke.civicweb.net/filepro/document/59007/Committee%20-%20Official%20Community%20Plan%20Advisory%20-%2028%20Jun%202021%20Agenda.pdf?widget=true>

For more OCP feedback from Sooke residents, please see public engagement items ...

<https://sooke.ca/district-services/departments/development-services/official-community-plan/>

Minutes of Climate Action Committee and Community Economic Development Committee meetings to explore current initiatives utilizing the Low Carbon Resilience model now adopted by the District ...

<https://sooke.ca/municipal-hall/agenda-minutes/>

Climate Action Committee’s framework for a Climate Action Plan in Sooke: <https://sooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/plans/Sooke-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf>

Recommended Book: Many of the issues (if not most) have been studied and addressed by Mark Roseland of UBC and presented in his book "Toward Sustainable Communities" available from New Society Publishers

Thoughts on youth engagement from Jeff Bateman: <http://www.jeffbateman.ca/blog/state-of-sookes-youth-nation-2021>

Contact District of Sooke Council Members: From Jeff Bateman: Everyone should feel free to call me at 250-642-2056 or email your questions to jbateman@shaw.ca. We on council are listening ... and, yes, doing our best in these challenging times.

Climate Caucus has a handbook for municipal councillors with lots of things that can be done that are in the local government jurisdiction.

Total Annual Carbon Cost of a Development – Alan Dolan

- Let’s take a fictional new development proposal in Sooke.
- Site is three hectares, half grassland, and half mid-life forest.
- 100 Dwellings
- About 250 people

Source	Tonnes CO _{2e}	Comments
Embodied Carbon	590 (one time)	Manufacture of materials, building construction, site prep, waste, etc. (up-front cost)
Dynamic emissions (daily living)	825/year	Driving, heating, cooling, cooking, etc. (ongoing cost)
Dynamic emissions (loss of carbon sink)	1,143/year	Removal trees, other vegetation, and soils (ongoing cost)
Total dynamic emissions	1,968/year	

- Sooke’s current carbon emissions = 46,574 tonnes CO_{2e}/year
- This one development is the equivalent of increasing Sooke’s Greenhouse gases by 4% per year (1,968/46,574 x 100)
- All approved developments (1,200 dwellings) will be the equivalent of increasing Sooke’s Greenhouse gases by almost 50% per year.

All data extrapolated from: *Capital Regional District 2018 GPC BASIC+ Community Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory Report*, Stantec (2020) and *Capital Region District – Municipalities and Electoral Areas 2007 Base Year and 2018 Reporting Year Energy & GHG Emissions Inventory*, Stantec (2020)

GHG Remarks – Roland Alcock

The science and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) say we must reduce GHG emissions by 50% by 2030, if we are to avoid more and more, longer lasting extreme weather events leading to catastrophic, run-away climate change. This is not voluntary or advisory and we all have to do that. No one, no District or jurisdiction is special or exempt.

When people say, “we have to have growth,” or “growth is inevitable,” without any caveat or restriction they are utterly wrong. We have an existing GHG budget now, set at the level of current emissions. This budget cannot be exceeded. In fact, the GHG budget MUST shrink by 7%, year over year. This means we can ONLY have growth if we institute measures, policies, rules and initiatives, RIGHT NOW, that will reduce GHG emissions this year by 7% PLUS whatever increase is embodied in any new development construction or operation. Otherwise, the mathematics simply do NOT add up! Just like a financial budget, we cannot exceed our carbon budget! We simply MUST repeat this mantra for every development “show me the numbers”!

If the District of Sooke does not do this but instead enables, encourages, and facilitates growth and development with NO reciprocal reductions in GHG emissions to create carbon budget room, they are complicit in the all-time record breaking (NOT just record for the day) temperatures we are all enduring right now, outside our windows. The whole of Western N. America is drying out and this means there WILL BE record forest fires once again this year. Do not doubt it. Without serious concerted emergency action, the District of Sooke will therefore also be complicit in the smoke-filled skies we will be forced to endure this summer and many summers to come.

And finally, the District of Sooke will be indirectly complicit in the massive disruption and dislocation that millions of people throughout the world will suffer in the coming decades.

Chat responses to the above:

* Well Roland is quite direct and unfortunately correct.

* Amen to Roland.

* 🙌

* Bravo Roland!

* Right on as ever, Roland

* We must pay attention to what Roland said.

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Group 1

Go-round – introductions and reaction to video

- People dove straight into their reactions to growth as opposed to their reactions to the film.

Growth

- Long time in Sooke; not what it used to be.
- Short time in Sooke; not what was expected.
- Lots of concern for the effects of rapid growth
- Disorientation when travelling on Sooke Road (Highway 14); can't tell where I am and where I turn; unrecognizable.
- People seem to just like to grow things.
- Hard to stop, money talks.
- Things people want require growth.
- There are positives and negatives of growth.
- Rural nature of Sooke is important and it is disappearing.
- But growth will just happen somewhere else.

Solutions

- Particularly important to distinguish between economic growth and population growth; we can grow and diversify our local economy without growing the population.
- We need to look at our economy in a different way.
- We need to slow down the growth and take stock of the situation.
- With pandemic, I am using more of my community — shopping, walking, and picnicking local.
- Ability to work in Sooke; create a live/work situation.
- Is Eustace Road retail and office development an answer?
- Need to end the commute for most people.
- Need to develop or expand industrial park areas; new business isn't just about retail.
- Need to make workspace easier to buy or rent.
- Promote shopping locally.
- Sustainable local farm markets
- Affordable housing
- Age distribution of everyone who is active is problematic; everyone is old; need to involve youth.
- To curtail growth and survive in the future, we will need to make concessions.

Group 2

Question 1, reaction to the video

Overall, everyone thought the video was good. There were good messages, and it gave plenty to think about.

One participant thought it was a moving video and highlighted the need for comprehensive local control.

Two participants were new to Sooke and said they were just listening for now.

Question 2, how do you feel about growth in Sooke?

One participant was a long time Transition Sooke person. This used to be a small town of fishers and loggers, but no longer. He had been pushing back for years but the BAU crowd will not listen. What we are doing now is not sustainable. The anxieties and realities of climate change are not taken seriously, even though civilisation is at risk.

Another speaker echoed the fact there used to be just two groups in Sooke; the loggers/fishers and retirees, who cared about Sooke and the environment. Now there is a large group “in the middle” whose lives are not centred on Sooke but simply own real estate here. They commute every day to Langford or Victoria. So how do we adapt to these new suburban realities and how do we reach this segment of our population?

One of the new to Sooke people said he came here to try a “west coast winter” because he could not go to Florida during the pandemic. Fell in love with the place and he likes the facilities here, including the co-housing opportunities.

Question 3, what should Sooke do about growth?

There needs to be a dialogue between Transition Sooke and the OCP. We need to try and get closer to it. We must emphasise sustainability not BAU. We must achieve a 7% reduction in carbon emissions.

We are struggling to reconcile two world views. Perhaps there is some middle ground such as limited development of unused land within 5 minutes of downtown? The large developments on the mountain, such as Sun River, stretching away into the hills is not the way to go.

There needs to be a policy towards development. Not just the way the developers want it. This speaker suggested we need our own local Development Corporation.

Another group member like this idea. The community can own each proposal and “steer the ship on a different course”.

One of these speakers said the Council must be willing to say “No” at some point. There needs to be zoning changes and we the people have a voice and some power and should use it to push for changes.

The discussion shifted to asking what other jurisdictions are doing? How are other communities running and how do they exercise control?

The Canadian Rural Revitalisation foundation was mentioned as a source of ideas.

Mention was made of Metchosin. There are no subdivisions there, so what does their OCP say? What do other OCP's say? Nelson is known to be very progressive and locally controlled and has some involvement in local power generation.

We could look at Nordic countries, which have smaller communities in rural environments a bit like Sooke.

One speaker said in 2004 Sooke won an award for best community building. In those days there was strong community spirit led by old timers like Mr. Wickheim and Phoebe Dunbar. Maybe that kind of volunteer spirit could be energised again?

The facilitator noted that volunteer spirit still exists as evidenced by the Sooke Salmon Enhancement Society. This is a completely volunteer run hatchery program (recently moved from old premises to new one at Charter Creek) which has maintained the Sooke River and De Mamiel Creek chinook and coho salmon runs for 30 years. It is an enormous amount of work from September to May and there at least 50 active volunteers.

Group 3

Question one: introduction and how did you react to the video?

- Counsellor in DoS. Been in Sooke 30 years; lots of volunteering in the community. He felt that the video was limited (didn't depict all sides of the growth story) but that what the people featured in it had to say did align with most of what he's heard from other people in Sooke.

- lives in View Royal and is observing the Town Hall as a member of WE-CAN (West Coast Climate Action Network) and SI-CAN (South Island Climate Action Network) that has 150 climate action organizations lined up as members (of which Transition Sooke is one).

- moved to Sooke 3 years ago "Sooke was not at all what I expected". The people in the video were saying what she heard when she decided to walk around her neighbourhood (one with houses close together, where a mountaintop had been destroyed to create a development and there are no green spaces) and ask people how they felt about living there. Their answers surprised her as she had assumed that they liked living in their development.

- piano teacher in Sooke; did try and help with Zero Waste Sooke and other groups, but too busy with young family

- came to Sooke with a dream and bought Malahat Farm in Otter Point/Shirley but dream didn't work out; now lives in centre of Sooke.

Question 2: How do you feel about growth in Sooke?

- Sooke is a bit odd in that you must drive to get to parks; there are no real green spaces that people can walk to in the town. By “green spaces” she meant more than just grass and dog walking trails, rather wildlife corridors and small natural intact ecosystems that would provide habitat for local flora and fauna.
- the Sooke counsellor displayed the cover of the Parks and Trails report recently done by the DoS which he suggested had plans for more and better parks.
- We are just turning into Langford (with all the unchecked growth and development).

Question 3: What should Sooke do about growth?

- There are 1200 future new living spaces on the books for Sooke. These are the results of decisions made 10 years ago and nothing can be done about that. As a counsellor, this person would like to hear any ideas about what Sooke can do about growth.
- I don't have any idea how development, bylaws, permits and things work so it is hard to know what we can do, who do we approach. If we knew what the rules and bylaws are that govern development, we might have a better sense of how we might be able to intervene to slow growth.
- We can't do much about private property, but we can require developers to donate park lands. We can hold a referendum asking the community if they would be in favour of a levy to collect money for a District land purchasing fund, especially waterfront.
- Sooke has no real image or supports.
- Council just gives lots of excuses. This person noted that in Sunriver they plan to take down a large forest of trees to put in a sports box and parking lot. She presented a petition to Council requesting that the (shelved) tree bylaw be put in place poste haste and felt that the response she got from Council was flippancy.

Group 4

Reaction to the Video

*People are concerned, esp. about maintaining the natural environment, we need to preserve what we have, need to lower GHGs.

*Appreciated the video. I'm new to Sooke and found the video interesting. It was well-structured, nice progression. People spoke from the heart.

*There are limits to growth; and we've already reached the limit, esp. with the amount of traffic going in and out of Sooke.

*Video was very well done, provided good input, universal appreciation for nature that is slowly being chipped away by development.

*What can the average citizen do?

Your thoughts about Growth in Sooke:

*it's not about growth per se, it's HOW we grow, how can we grow as green as possible? the technology is available for green growth, but now, this technology is expensive.

*I felt a sense of resignation coming through the interviews. I think that some are saying: "there's nothing we can do about unchecked growth" ...but I'm not willing to give up yet.

*I appreciate the points raised in the video; but I'm not against development, I'm also aware of our responsibility to respond to the climate emergency. We can do both.

*Unchecked growth is the problem; we need to grow resiliency in Sooke.

What can we do?

*We need a plan. In the past, Sooke was went through unchecked growth, and no one at District Council did much about it. We need to learn from other communities—how can we grow ethically as well as being environmentally responsible without stopping development?

*If we restrict businesses from developing in Sooke, then these businesses will just go elsewhere, and the level of GHGs will still increase.

*I am particularly concerned about protecting our water—we waste a lot of water that can be recycled.

*I'm not against new businesses coming to Sooke, I want to see more local businesses in Sooke.

*Trying to balance development and the environment isn't working—we need to make hard decisions now.

* I'm seeing a lot of residential growth as well. More and more families are moving to Sooke, mainly because single family homes are still affordable in Sooke. I think there are two different types of people in Sooke: the long-time residents who are seeing Sooke change from a small community and feeling sad about this; but the newcomers don't have that same memory—some of them would like to see more growth—esp. more stores.

* There's no such thing as infinite growth on a finite planet.

* The District of Sooke is starting to use a Green Lens which will help our decision-makers consider the impact of the environment whenever they are deciding on policies and plans.

* We need a moratorium on development until we get things sorted out.

* We need to change the system.

- * The first thing to do is to reduce the amount of vehicle traffic. Work on alternatives such as better mass transportation, ride sharing, better sidewalks and bike lanes so people can walk or cycle instead of driving.
- * Stop burning wood for heating. Set up special funding to help people retrofit their homes and stop using fossil fuels to heat their houses.
- * We need to promote a faster transition from ICE cars to electric vehicles.
- * But we can't forget that there is a high number of people in Sooke who are struggling tremendously just to get food on the table. They need to find jobs so they can pay their rent. They would welcome more businesses in Sooke. They don't own homes so ideas about retrofitting homes and higher rebates to purchase electric cars are not relevant for them. We can't leave people behind.
- * We are just a grain of sand in a big world—we can't significantly reduce GHGs on our own.
- * There are lots of things we can do at the community level—for example, change the antiquated codes in the construction world...allow for grey water capture, for example.
- * I just think that smaller is better.

Group 5

What can Leadership in District of Sooke do?

1. Sooke needs development model that is sensitive to environment

- Must have green spaces with Douglas fir (iconic species)
- Must provide good bicycle trails act promptly on Master Plan.
- Must ensure that developments embed climate restoring practices. Make sure they allow clotheslines, front yard gardens, discourage lawns and pesticides.

2. Sooke needs programs to protect the environment

- Need **assurance** that green space and unique environment will be protected, such as reserve fund for buying land, covenants, and restrictions.
- Need for programs for environmental restoration.
- Need education campaign to stop using pesticides (even if you can't ban)

3. Sooke needs model to manage growth (not manage the consequences of unmanaged growth, not piecemeal)

- Need to control growth, such as policies to allow only "smart growth".
- Recognize carrying capacity of Sooke.

To Grow or Not to Grow: Developing a Liveable Sooke in a Climate Emergency

- Need to work with real numbers and commitment in planning and reporting (show how we're reducing)
- Assure water security, enable water gathering.

4. Sooke needs to demonstrate **innovation** (environmental, alternative energy: solar, wind, alternative technology: heat pumps)

- Invite innovative industry and businesses (new technologies)- become a town brand.
- Make hard decisions even when economics may not make sense today.
- Reduce traffic by supporting local business that hire from Sooke (support training)
- Consider a Community Control Development Corporation

CHAT SUMMARY

Issues Raised

- Indigenous Concerns: I think there needs to be mention and consideration for Indigenous concerns for land within Sooke and the rights of T'Sou-ke Nation to use the land for Traditional Harvest and Hunting which is impeded by the constant development of land and their right to be included in these decisions that the local government is making without their input.
-- I also agree that not only do we need to respect First Nation's rights, but we should also start being proactive on the topic.
-- Private developers are being given cart blanche to develop. They remove the Nation's traditional hunting and harvest areas. Is there the potential of achieving these lands back through Treaty rights with the land still intact for their use?
-- The district has updated its Memorandum of Understanding with the T'Sou-ke First Nation. The Mayor and Chief Planes meet on a regular basis with a goal of respectful government-to-government relations to the benefit of the District and T'Sou-ke together. Mayor Tait is also chair of the CRD's First Nations Relations Committee.
- Issues with the Draft OCP: The draft OCP has no plan to reduce GHG. Climate measures will make Sooke unaffordable. Catch 22.
Why does the OCP not have a plan for reducing the required 7% which is 3765 tco2 per year.
Response: Council has adopted the 7% reduction /year policy. Now it's just making it happen.
- Cutting down forests: The District of Sooke cannot say they are addressing climate change but at the same time taking down forests that are paramount to fighting climate change.
- Climate Action Plan: Sooke had an excellent climate action plan adopted in 2010. And then ignored for 10 years. Now we're looking to replace it with a new one.
- Why just focus on Sooke? We are just one small community...
Answer: --the focus is on our town. On the local. Yes, the country and the planet need to move in the same direction, but we can affect what our town does. This is the role of Transition Sooke.
- Limited Access to Recycling in Sooke: a note that the Styrofoam collection Depot hours in Sooke are challenging for those that work during the day, limited access.
-- PMD does do pick-ups as well.

Suggested Solutions

- Need for more solutions: A lot of people really want to know what solutions are, what to do, where to get info, and where to get help.
- Wind Power According to the wind map of this area, we do have sufficient wind (in certain areas of the district) for this innovative technology. (<https://lowerturbines.com>)
-- but wind power requires vast areas of flat land to install. It could be risky and will remove the landscape and endanger birds.
-- we're in great position to use both wind and solar: usually when the sun stops shining the wind picks up
- Solar Panels for Sooke District Office: there is a large area by the district office that would be ideal for putting in solar panels. It is important that DoS show what can be done as examples and models for others to follow.
- Youth Engagement: Just ask the Girl Guides to help. Our Pathfinder unit will jump at the chance.
-- the recent Engage Sooke consultation included youth ideas and they consisted of adding a Walmart to Sooke and more fast-food places ☺

- Unfortunately, many parents of those youth also want a Walmart and fast-food places.
- Of course, youth want to be able to shop and hang out in their community
- My 8-year-old daughter has started an Eco-Club with friends, and they are looking for ways to help; maybe I can hook her up with Transition Sooke!

Funding for Solutions: The draft OCP is recommending “Create a \$50,000 reserve fund to be used for sustainable economic development initiatives in the context of an Economic Development Corporation”. (Policy 3.4.3.3. of the draft OCP) This reserve fund is not for land purchase; it would be for establishment of a committee to attract investors and innovation to Sooke. What kind of investors? Here’s excerpt from the draft Community Economic Development strategy being developed by the CED Committee “To attract new businesses that are Low Carbon Resilient. Definition of Low Carbon Resilient businesses are those that, to the greatest extent possible:

contribute to a circular economy,

- o protect natural resources and sinks,
- o provide protection from climate risks,
- o do not increase GHG emissions or compensate for their GHG emissions.
- o identify social, environmental, and economic co-benefits as part of the business vision.

All is in process and subject to iterative change. The excerpt above was from yesterday’s first-draft plan presented in the CED Committee ...

- Learn from Other Communities:

Check out Campbell River District (<https://nexstream.is/partners>). Looks like they really moved forward with the idea of engaging with future thinking. Quite impressive Nelson is a leading municipality in BC—and they are not dis-similar to Sooke.

- Transportation:

- Improve walkability and bike ability in the district
- better bus service to Sooke could reduce emissions from needing to commute for work but the transit system is abysmal taking forever to commute to town, so people are forced to drive their cars

--Sooke has a transportation plan to be implemented post pandemic:

<https://www.bctransit.com/documents/1529710177752>

- Use “Green Lens” (Low Carbon Resilient) approach being taken by the district is a good start. Sustainable Development Strategy provides a blueprint for where we can go in future. The Climate Action Committee is developing the framework for a Climate Action Plan along with a “7% Solution” scenario focused on GHG reduction in buildings and transportation. <https://sooke.ca/wp-content/uploads/plans/Sooke-Sustainable-Development-Strategy.pdf>

-- The Climate Action Committee’s Data Group will be presenting a set of tangible 7% solution goals and ideas at the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 19

- Making difficult choices: Regarding human population growth and the environment - we can’t eat our cake and have it too.

-- this is an important point, which is that we must discuss GHG emissions in the context of population growth. Everyone needs to live somewhere.

- Higher Building Codes: What Step Code is Sooke at? Saanich is aiming at Step Code 5 but will allow Step Code 3 if all electric and no gas!
 - Answer: We are at Step Code 3 effective this year and will move systematically to Step 5 according to the BC timetable of Step 5 in 2032.
 - The draft OCP has numerous recommendations on climate building code recommendations but at what cost to build and affordability. Again, not measurement accountability
- Tree Planting: What would happen if everyone planted one tree on their property? What does each resident need to do to contribute to GHG reduction?
 - a nice thought but I live in the middle of the forest and the thought of fire here is so intense that we can barely sleep at night. the forests are so very dry after 3 yrs. plus of drought...
 - Planting a tree is great. To mitigate our carbon footprint, we would need to plant something like a thousand or more each.
 - maybe we could just push more to keep forests intact
 - Deciduous trees are preferable from a wildfire perspective, but I am curious to learn how they compare on GHG's to conifers.
- Political: I'm new here, but I come from the U.S. where I worked for a few political campaigns over the years. If the City Council and Mayor are not doing what has been suggested in the OCP and other docs over the years, are there electoral remedies?
- Replace Oil and Gas for heating homes Replacing oil and gas furnaces will take a big chunk out of GHGs. CleanBC Community Energy Coach can help communities with getting the information out and help residents navigate all the rebates available.
- Individual actions that individuals on this ZOOM meeting can do before the next Town Hall?
 - All of us to contribute to build an online info resource library
 - Everyone needs to start living at zero GHG footprint
 - The Green Energy Team of Transition Sooke has handouts that we can share with everyone on what individuals can do that is organized by "no cost", "low cost" and "higher cost."
 - BetterHomesBC.ca can do a free virtual home assessment with you to advise you on where you can make energy savings.

Evaluation Comments about the Townhall

- Very inspiring video at the outset, thank you.
- A great team effort to make this work. Much appreciated. And of course, the input from all the participants too.

To Grow or Not to Grow: Developing a Liveable Sooke in a Climate Emergency

- Thank you for all this work. I am so happy to see this in my new community.
- Thank you for this venue.
- Much appreciate this session.
- Thanks for the great job.
- Education is important thank you for doing this and yes, it's a conversation and education!!!

Suggestions for future presentation/ topics for next Town Hall

- For more discussion next time: earth jurisprudence
- Re: Alan's slides on GHGs expanded for a new development:
I feel it would be helpful to list the alternatives when discussing the theoretical development and embodied emissions. in other words, it would be good to see the same slide, but showing the alternatives which will achieve our goals. What kinds of scenarios result in the 7 percent annual decrease?

Results of Survey of Participants (N=23)

Transition Sooke Town Hall

To Grow or Not to Grow:

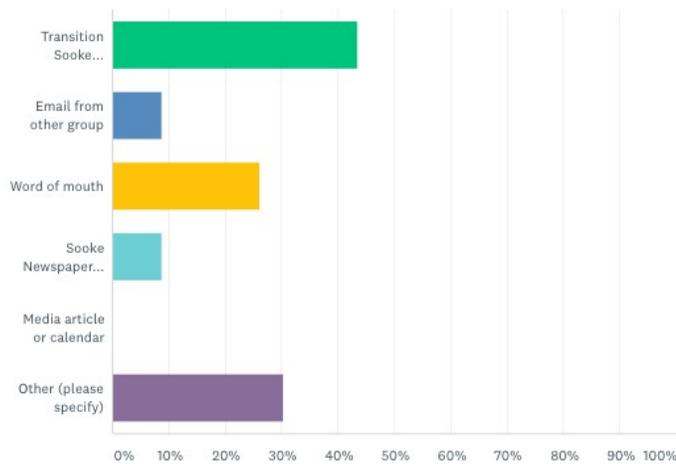
Developing a Liveable Sooke in a Climate Emergency

June 26, 2021

Q1

How did you hear about the Town Hall?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



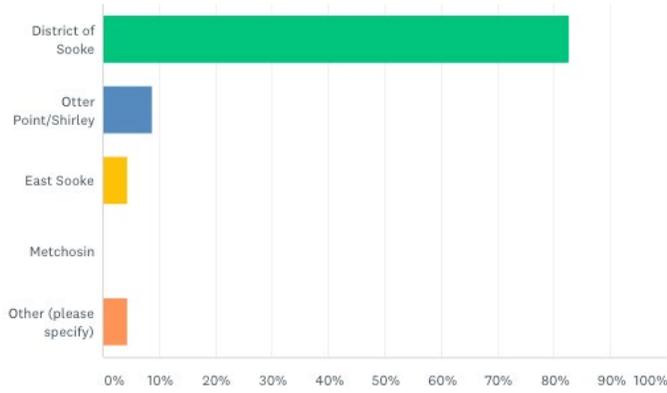
Other: Sooke Chamber of Commerce (2), Sooke newspaper article June 24, Sooke TownWebsite, Facebook, Climate Group member, Council meeting

To Grow or Not to Grow: Developing a Liveable Sooke in a Climate Emergency

Q2

Where do you live?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

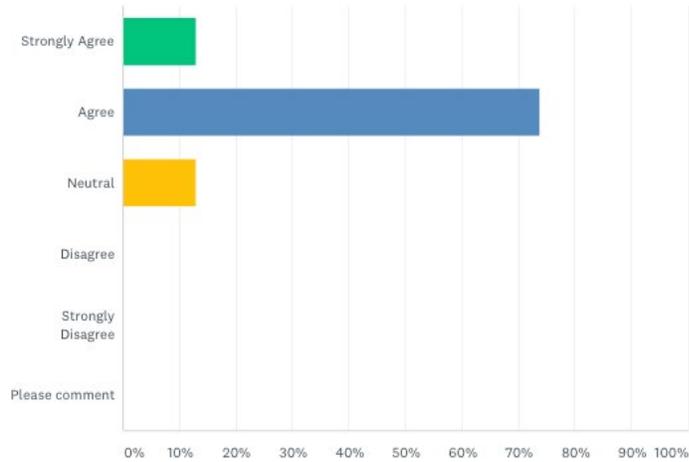


Other: View Royal

Q3

Overall this was a very informative Town Hall

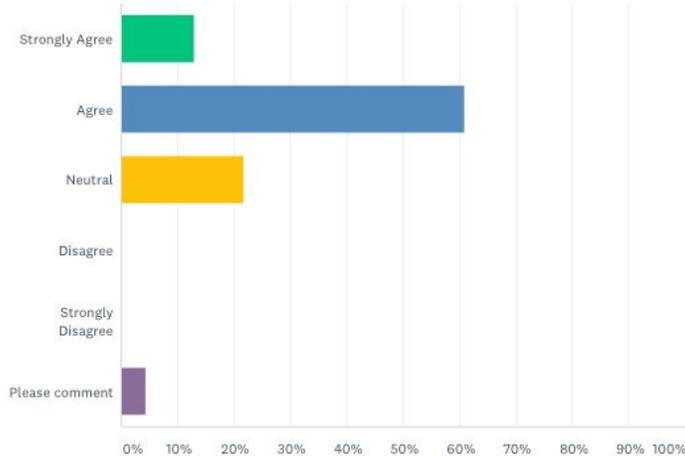
Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



Q4

The Town Hall met my expectations

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

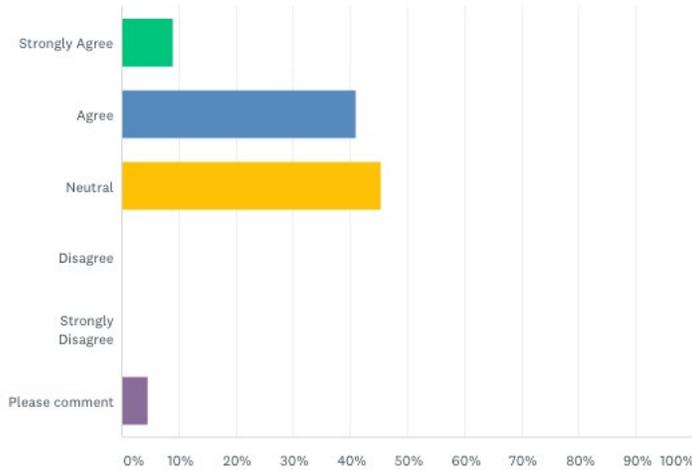


Comment: To be more effective politically, the event could have had a more focused conclusion~ the statistics about emissions per new build were especially important. So were the reactions I heard that repeated how important keeping trees was. We could have given him two things: one, make all new developments keep trees; two, reduce or eliminate new developments. I do think those three stats (emissions from clearing land, building a home, and living in a home) must be developed more specifically (single-family dwelling vs, multi-family, for example) and that we must determine how BC and Canada plan to reach their targets, and how much is down to individual municipalities. And we need rock-solid justification for the figures. And we need to know how Canada can accommodate hundreds of thousands of immigrants a year without increasing emissions unfairly: perhaps emissions per population? (We and the US are among the worst in the world for this, I believe.) I would like to pass on something from a blog I follow (by Caitlin Johnstone): "Dear younger generation -- Sorry for destroying the environment, but in our defence, we did everything we possibly could short of inconveniencing ourselves in any way or doing anything we don't like doing or taking any kind of meaningful action." I, to find it difficult to take steps that seem necessary but would make big changes in my own and everybody else's lives. I want to be sure they are necessary, but if they are, I guess we must take them, if we can.

Q5

My areas of concern were addressed

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1



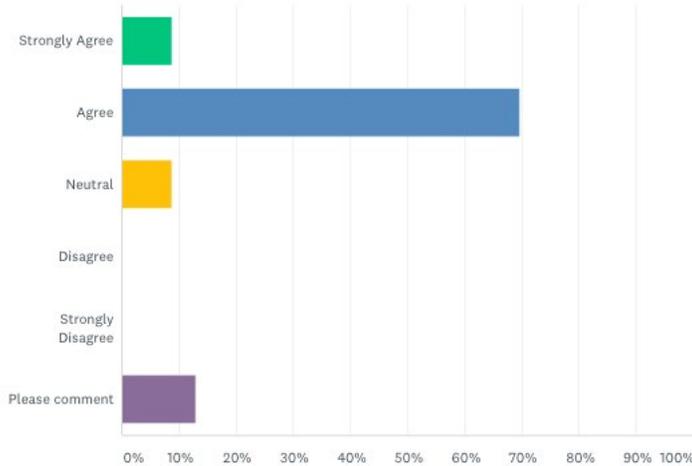
Comment: I think it was a beginning conversation. and an especially IMPORTANT one that needs a lot of follow-up and education, esp. for non-members. The comments I heard about Transition Sooke leading up to the meeting gave me the impression that this group is seen as so far left as to be irrelevant and ignorable and that was not my experience. This group has an important understanding and concern they would like addressed in moving forward . . . but are seen as being against all things that most would consider progress . . . so getting out information and educating the public while and seeking a middle ground at least for the moment, will be a continuing battle until there is a greater understanding of the knowledge and the intent of Transition Sooke. Fear of the unknown and restrictions are so readily seen as the bogeyman.

Especially currently.

Q6

I had lots of opportunities to bring my ideas forward

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



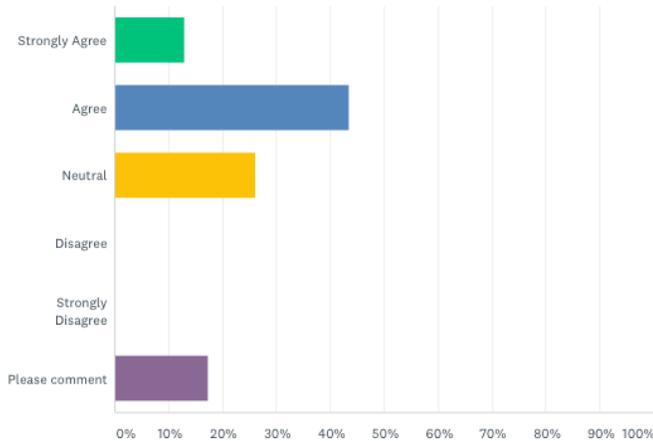
Comments:

1. I missed 1/2 of the session so really cannot comment. I would like to have ongoing sessions involving political pressure to effect change. Talk must lead to strong positions not just be repetitions of same. Will Transition join national promotion of housing as major component of next election?
2. I had disruptive network difficulties that kept me from participating.
3. I am relatively new to Sooke, so I am just getting to know the important issues around development, land stewardship, carbon footprint. I am happy to have joined this group.

Q7

The video "Growing Pains" was an important part of the Town Hall

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

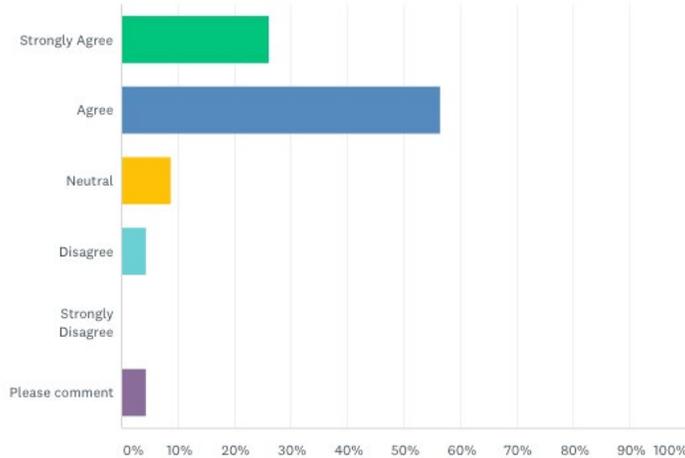


1. The video in my opinion was one sided to get your point through, and did not take into consideration any business owners, developers, contractors that build the houses you live in, the water you drink and the food you eat.
2. The video was highly effective for starting a conversation. A broader group (including some non-white and indigenous voices) might be welcome if you attempt that again. From a marketing standpoint video (in general and this one in particular) is an effective tool, I would encourage you to do more of them and find places to get them onto people's screens.
3. I unfortunately had to come late, so I didn't get to view the video.
4. I missed this part of the meeting.

Q8

The small groups were an effective way to share ideas

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

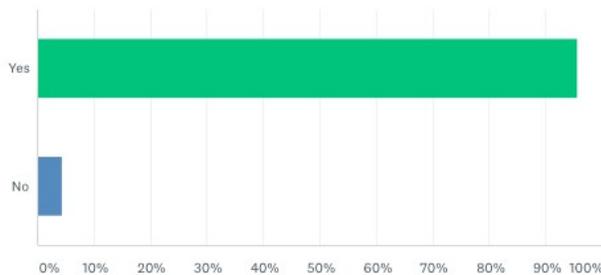


Comment: Where does the discussion go from here? It was a good starting point. but this needs to happen repeatedly to be effective and gain momentum! Recognizing the many levels this affects us as individuals - emotionally, financially, basic needs and the growing disparity, and of how that affects us as a community is a huge ongoing discussion. Sad that our counsellor felt the need to grandstand at the end...

Q9

In September, we will hold another Town Hall with guest speakers providing answers to: What can Sooke do about growth? Would you attend?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0



Comments:

1. I was pleased with the organization, execution, and the method of this town hall. I will definitely attend any info sessions and believe in your goal, but we must not just say no to future development, but rather encourage growth with consequences, meaning we can do better with construction and development, and the consequences of waste, poor building methods and better technology for our contractors in all areas. Well Done!

2. We are in the cusp of great changes and unique opportunities to welcome a new way of doing things that takes us away from "business as usual". We must come to terms with how our current way of operating our civilization is simply not sustainable so that we can start exploring ways to work and live more consciously and more in harmony with the natural systems that sustain us and our world.
3. 1) Transition Sooke should sponsor and promote candidates for Sooke City Council positions open in the next election (Sept 22, I believe, but information is not clear on the Sooke website). These candidates would support the positions put forward by Transition Sooke, and ultimately, if the City Council develops a majority of supporters of the Transition Sooke positions, could make changes to town bylaws to support changes which have been recommended by Transition Sooke for some years. Even if the Transition Sooke candidate is ultimately not elected, the campaign period would provide many opportunities to educate the Sooke community as to what is at stake for them. 2) The current Transition Sooke website contains a wealth of information, but it is not easy to find. I would turn this website into an information resource for the community, especially for newcomers, so they could find information about things like where to recycle plastic and Styrofoam, farmer's markets and local farms, what we can do as individuals or businesses to decrease our own carbon emission footprint, e.g., I would then create a handout which could be distributed through real estate agents, at farmer's markets, etc. to newcomers to Sooke — businesses and individuals — with key information. The more Transition Sooke does for these newcomers, the more they will be likely to join the Transition Sooke team as they settle into their new communities. 3) This looks like a wonderful organization, and I will join and volunteer for activity as soon as my other obligations for work are settled. Thank you for doing so much work toward the future of my new home community.
4. You are doing great work for our community. Thanks!
5. It felt good to know that others within our community share the same concerns. Especially that we don't have much time to change the course or direction that Sooke is on. I learnt about this group and can learn about some actions I can take to prevent Climate Change.
6. I think the general framing/wording could be a bit more positive and allow the information to make the case for itself . . . Even the title statement "What can Sooke do about growth" is oddly worded to my ear. How about "Managing Wise Growth in Sooke." We won't stop growing, most don't see any need to stop, but we can manage it. You can invite people into discussion and education when you haven't set up a scenario where you already have the answers and they must come to your point of view . . . Asking questions was a great way to get people thinking, to give people the tools to come to their own understanding and conclusions without saying growth is wrong and must be stopped. It

may well be, but you won't find agreement in taking a dogmatic approach and leading with that statement and that is sadly how Transitions has been seen by many in the community. I had NO IDEA that buildings put off CO2 into the air . . . a big duh/AHA moment, so that was good, factual info: Sooke and the effects of growth. making statistics interesting by showing how it affects people, giving other cities examples of what is possible to alleviate the effects of growth used in other countries. There is nothing "organic" about "development". Because building is expensive and a complex process, it happens in large swaths rather than one small building at a time . . . there is no real game plan along the way for this town and it's one road in and out issues . . . the community decision-makers are sadly underpaid and lacking experience. but they are the lightning rod. The history of development is long - it's like trying to stop a moving train. you can't just step out in front and wave your hands a few times and give up. Education over time is key. and can't be put off! as the weather is showing us.

7. A bit on the short side, don't you think?
8. Just came as an observer to find out what Sooke was doing. Felt it really wasn't my place to comment as I do not live in Sooke or the surrounding area.
9. I was disappointed with my personal input into the discussion. I am weary of Zoom interaction. Hopefully, the next meeting will take place in the flesh, face to real face.
10. Invite the youth. Specifically have a youth forum. If it primarily retirees, it won't be relatable to the general population. Include a knowledge or information session tied into the day. If this is event in-person it could be along the lines of here's what a repair cafe does, learn how to make a bag from your T-Shirt or jeans, host a craft supply swap, food sharing table (i.e., bring extra garden produce), host a food fridge. What can we do to build resilience in Sooke (rather than what can we do to stop growth)? Let's be smart, green thinking, informed and provide action items that every member of the community can undertake.
11. I struggle to understand why the Mayor and Council seem to disregard the needs and wants of Sooke residents. So many people are concerned about the natural environment in Sooke, climate change, and rapid growth in Sooke but it appears the district representatives seem to want unfettered and unchecked growth regardless of what it is doing to the environment and the community. I hope that Council will start to listen more to what Transition Sooke has to say.