

Climate Emergency and the Sooke Official Community Plan

OCP Advisory Committee • February 25, 2021



Transition Sooke

Community • Resilience • Climate

Transforming to a just, sustainable society

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.



What the *Local Government Act* says

473 (3) 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.



Sooke's Commitment

Supported CRD Declaration of a Climate Emergency (2019)
with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2030



Other Actions

- Council endorses the Climate Action Committee Work Plan (June 2020)
- Transition Sooke asked Council to make climate action the overarching framework for Sooke's new OCP (September 2020)



Growth

In ten years, based on 3.2% annual population growth (2019 Housing Needs Report, Statistics Canada), Sooke's population is projected to grow to 17,800 from 13,000

Is this a practical plan to reduce carbon emissions?

- More population growth will mean more GHGs from vehicles and home heating
- Development is converting carbon sinks (vegetation and soil) into carbon emitters



Growth

- Zoning that permits removal of soils, trees and other vegetation will reduce ecological services provided by Sooke's natural assets, its resilience to Climate Change and the quality of life for all residents.
- As well as being a carbon sink, Sooke's natural assets support
 - Agriculture and food security
 - Recreational green spaces
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Natural drainage
 - Biodiversity



Growth

If Sooke continues to grow, it ceases to be a small seaside town
surrounded by forests and farms



Total Annual Carbon Cost of a Development

- 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



Total Annual Carbon Cost of a Development

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 of trees, other vegetation, and soils (ongoing cost)
Total dynamic emissions	1,968/year	



Total Annual Carbon Cost of a Development

- Sooke's current carbon emissions = 48,386 tonnes CO_{2e}/year
- This one development is the equivalent of increasing Sooke's Greenhouse gases by 4% per year (1,968/48,386 x 100)
- All approved developments (1,200 dwellings) will be the equivalent of increasing Sooke's Greenhouse gases by almost 50% a year
- **Note: CO₂ emissions are accumulating in the atmosphere**

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)



What should Sooke do?

For the next ten years, we need to focus on:

- Immediately developing a Climate Action Plan
- Meeting our GHG targets
- Adopting a very low-growth model that focuses on zero carbon, affordable/non-market/subsidized housing (greatest need)



What should Sooke do?

For the next ten years, we need to focus on:

- Encouraging and providing incentives for low-carbon improvements to existing and new infrastructure (heat pumps, conservation, solar panels, etc.)
- Encouraging and providing incentives for zero-carbon transportation alternatives (electric buses, electric cars, associated infrastructure, etc.)
- Exploring other ways to fund infrastructure (regional, provincial, federal government [not grants])



What should the OCP do?

- Address the climate emergency by setting emissions targets and prescribing actions that will meet those targets
- Propose a very low-growth scenario and examine the long-term benefits and costs of this scenario



The Future

What does it mean to be a sustainable small town
and a healthy, resilient community?

Is it time to re-think our urbanization model?



Questions / Comments

