

An Evaluation of the District of Sooke's Official Community Plan from a Planetary Health
Perspective

By

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B.Sc., University of Victoria, 2019

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

in the School of Public Administration

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We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Abstract

The District of Sooke is drafting an Official Community Plan (OCP) that once adopted will set the vision for Sooke until 2050. Given the nature of municipal jurisdiction, municipalities are critically positioned to respond to the current international environmental crises. This mixed-methods study evaluated the draft OCP using a Planetary Health Framework (PHF), multi-sector focus groups and questionnaires. The study assessed if and under what conditions the draft OCP contributes to planetary health. Focus group participants saw the draft OCP as promoting many of the PHF's dimensions positively. However, participants noted concerns around inadequate community engagement, the OCP's design/clarity, the risks to mental and physical health, government coordination and decision-making bias. Recommendations for how Sooke could better contribute to planetary health were raised by participants and presented in this thesis. This evaluation was the first application of planetary health approaches for a comprehensive evaluation of an existing policy.

Keywords: Planetary health; evaluation; logic analysis; official community plan; focus groups; local government;

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Acknowledgements

To Dr. Astrid Brousselle, you have been utterly pivotal in my thesis. Thank you so much for your constant support, mentorship and guidance. This thesis has been a long time coming – thank you for sticking around with me for so long. I have learned so much from you and I will take these lessons into my heart and future endeavors.

To Dr. Astrid V. Pérez Piñán for providing helpful feedback and guidance on this thesis.

To this study's participants, thank you from the bottom of my heart as you made time to participate in this study. Thank you for caring about Sooke and for being brave in sharing your convictions for a better Sooke. I hope you see yourselves in this thesis.

Thank you to the staff at Vancouver Island Regional Library (Sooke Branch). You were all very helpful in facilitating effective focus group sessions.

Thank you to the District of Sooke for participating in this thesis. Your input at all stages of this study has been instrumental in the completion of this work.

Thank you, Kimberley Cook, for all your expertise and efficiency in supporting the MPA program, I am especially grateful to your kindness throughout my time with the program.

Last and most importantly, to my life partner and amazing wife, Aliya Schwabe, without you, this thesis would not have been possible. Thank you for all your support watching our kids, cooking delicious meals and nurturing my soul.

Dedication

To the current and upcoming residents of Sooke, BC. May Sooke's future inspire you and fill you with pride.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Earth is now characterized by human-induced environmental changes and society faces existential challenges to the planet's health and sustainability. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are exceeding planetary boundaries, threatening human well-being and the habitability of Earth. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that considers the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic factors. As the world's environmental crises wage on, Canadian municipalities are optimally positioned to implement wholistic interventions that support both nature and people ([see section 1.1](#)).

Municipalities are critically positioned to respond to climate change and other environmental challenges due to rising populations in urban areas, especially in Canada, as well as the tangible nature of municipal jurisdictions (Statistics Canada, 2022; see [section 1.2](#)). Climate change, which is a result of the current organization of our societies, damages Earth's many ecosystems and human systems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has shown the observed impacts of climate change on ecosystems across the world with high confidence (International Panel on Climate Change, 2022). There is an urgent requirement to revise our decision-making process to contribute to climate action, and in a way that contributes positively to other social and environmental challenges. This is the definition of planetary health:

The achievement of the highest attainable standard of health, wellbeing, and equity worldwide through judicious attention to the human systems—political, economic, and social—that shape the future of humanity and the Earth's natural systems that define the safe environmental limits within which humanity can flourish. Put simply, planetary health is the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which it depends (Whitmee et al., 2015, p.1978).

As municipalities seek to make a difference in the fight for nature and human well-being, the District of Sooke is currently drafting an instrumental policy document with far reaching implications. Under British Columbia's *Local Government Act*, municipalities have the option of enacting an optional bylaw entitled an Official Community Plan (OCP), which is a long-range (20-30 years) visionary document that guides municipal decision-making (District of Sooke, 2022). Once an OCP is adopted, municipalities must ensure their bylaws and works are aligned with the plan (Government of British Columbia, 2024). Given the last OCP was enacted in 2010, the District of Sooke is in the process of adopting a new OCP with planned updates every five years. The OCP sets forth policies that guide the locations of "homes, businesses and industry, agriculture, and parks and other public spaces" while directly affecting "transportation choices, housing affordability and options, community character, protection of ecological and agricultural areas, resource management, economic vitality, and financial costs associated with paying for District services such as pipes and streets" (District of Sooke, p.18, 2022). All Sooke municipal policy formulation and implementation must align with the OCP once enacted (see [section 1.3](#)).

Brousselle and McDavid’s Planetary Health Framework (PHF) offers a comprehensive foundation for guiding policy and decision making, emphasizing the need for integrated solutions (2021). Alternative frameworks to the PHF were briefly discussed, rationalizing the adoption of the PHF for this thesis. Compared to other frameworks, the PHF included strengths in applicability, flexibility and ease of implementation (see [section 1.5](#)).

The PHF is comprised of eight dimensions: pollution, waters and lands, biodiversity, prosperity, equity, health, governance and power relations (see Table 1 in [section 1.4](#)). These lenses under the PHF allow evaluations to simultaneously consider multiple key sectors during all stages of interventions. Municipalities, as key actors in local governance, have the potential to play a significant role in addressing these challenges through the implementation of effective policies and initiatives aligned with the PHF (see [section 1.4](#)).

This thesis evaluated the Sooke OCP to assess if and under what conditions the OCP will contribute to planetary health, as represented by the PHF (see [section 2](#); Brousselle & McDavid, 2021). This evaluation is timely as the draft and overdue OCP has the potential to impact local policy decisions until 2050 (District of Sooke, 2022).

This evaluation used a theory-based approach (i.e., logic analysis) (see [section 1.6](#)) based on different methods:

- A conceptual model was developed to characterize the OCP within the context of the PHF (see [section 3.1](#)).
- A desktop analysis of the OCP’s policies and actions were conducted to support participant understanding of the OCP (see [section 3.2](#)).
- Focus groups with citizens, public servants, elected officials, businesses, builders, equity groups and nature advocates were conducted to inform how different actors saw the Sooke OCP promoting or demoting the various dimensions of the PHF (i.e., strengths and risks to human and natural systems) (see [section 3.3](#)).
- Questionnaires to focus group participants were administered asking qualitative and quantitative questions, which address the alignment of the Sooke OCP with planetary health lenses (see [section 3.3](#)).

The data from this study (i.e., focus group transcripts and questionnaires) was analyzed to inform the strengths and risks of the Sooke OCP, as it relates to planetary health. Analysis was done by focus group and by dimension of the PHF to identify sector-specific needs, overlapping needs, and recommendations to better align the OCP with planetary health lenses (see [section 3.4](#)).

A desktop analysis of the draft OCP was conducted prior to the commencement of focus groups. This analysis determined nearly half of all unique OCP policies and actions are tangible (i.e., palpable and concrete), the other half non-tangible (i.e., abstract, vague and not easily measurable). Unique policies and actions were sorted by Community Policy (e.g., Natural

Environment, Housing, Transportation) from most to least number of policies and actions (see [section 4.1](#)).

Focus group results showed that many participants believed the draft OCP will support most of the planetary health lenses positively. Many stated that they honestly believed the OCP truly represents the needs of Sooke. Participants saw themselves reflected in the draft OCP, however, they also raised risks of the OCP in demoting planetary health lenses (see [section 4](#)). The figure below shows a snapshot of all participant responses to questionnaires. The figure shows the public perception of each dimension of the PHF in promoting or demoting planetary health.

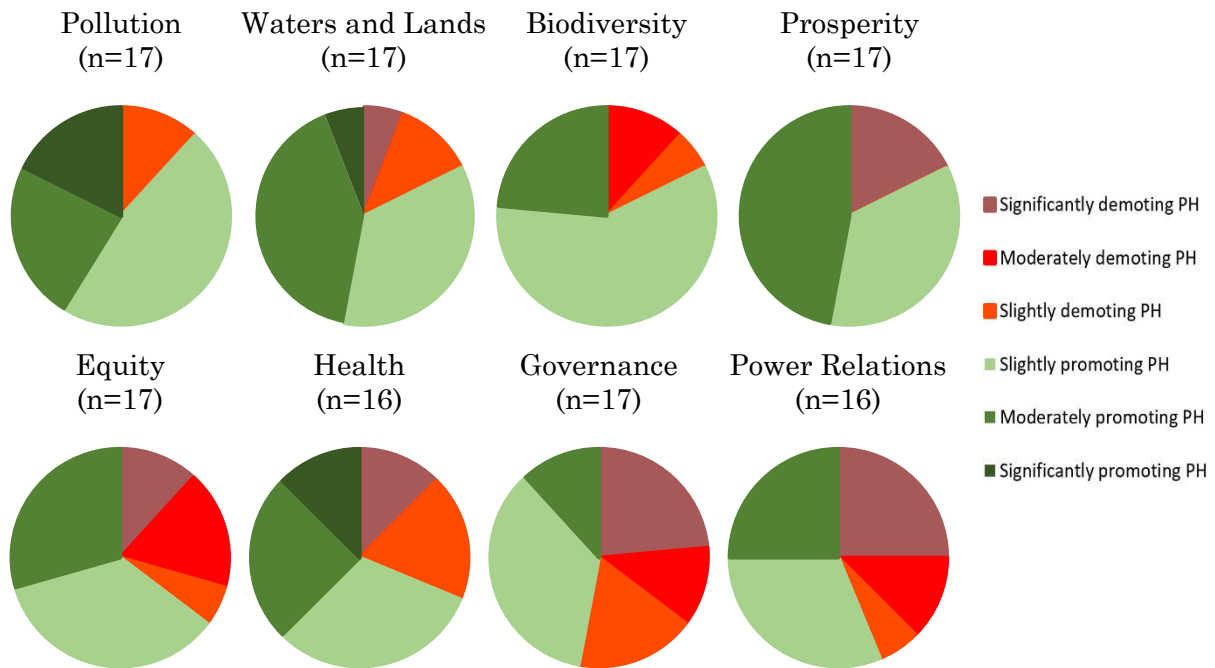


Figure - Snapshot of All Questionnaire Responses Across Focus Groups Regarding Participant Perceptions on the Official Community Plan’s Alignment with Planetary Health Lenses

Key Findings

- 36% of all participants (n=17) felt that the OCP will demote equity if implemented (see [section 4.3.6](#)). They highlighted the need for more equitable decision-making processes and greater community involvement. Additionally, participants called for broader engagement with the Sooke community to better address equity issues and ensure all community needs are represented in decision-making.
- Many participants noted issues in the OCP’s design and format, stating that the document needs to be more accessible, clearly articulated and readable.

- 31% of all participants felt that the OCP will demote health if implemented (see [section 4.3.7](#)). This suggests a need for further analysis and consideration of potential areas for improvement.
- The majority of all participants (53%) believed that the OCP's governance is slightly, moderately or significantly uncoordinated (see [section 4.3.8](#)). This suggested that there are areas for improvement in terms of coordination and collaboration among the various stakeholders involved in the OCP's implementation.
- A significant portion (44%) of participants believed that the OCP is slightly, moderately or significantly disempowering Sooke residents (see [section 4.3.9](#)). Many expressed concerns on Council decisions not representing the community's needs, claiming concerns in Councillor bias and lobbying pressure as underpinning the issue. They believed these biased decisions are detrimental to the community's goals, objectives, and finances.

While the five focus groups expressed different priorities for the OCP in meeting planetary health values, there was strong overlap among all participant opinions. Specific groups prioritized the need for further supports for marginalized communities, businesses and nature conservation. Areas of overlap included the need for the OCP to be simpler, decision-making to be more accountable and transparent, and the need for additional channels for civic engagement (see [section 5.1](#)).

Dimension-specific needs according to the PHF were heavily weighted towards issues in governance and power relations across all focus groups. There was a general disbelief among participants that the OCP will be implemented in its current form. Many raised the need for further civic engagement, accountable decision-making and Sooke's shortcomings as a commuter town (see [section 5.2](#)).

Focus group participants provided many recommendations for Sooke's OCP to further contribute to planetary health. These recommendations were synthesized and detailed for the District of Sooke's consideration in revising the draft OCP (see [section 6](#)). Further work is needed to refine the recommendations for applicability to municipal jurisdictions, among other key considerations.

This study contributed to further understanding the planetary health framework in a practical setting and generated novel knowledge in policy evaluation. This project was the first application of planetary health approaches and tools for a comprehensive evaluation of an existing policy. It informed future theory-based evaluations for planetary health. This thesis may contribute to better actions for nature and humans through a wider awareness of the Planetary Health Framework and adoption of the framework by more organizations and governments.

1. Introduction

This section discusses the current international environmental crises, the important role of municipalities in addressing social and environmental issues, the District of Sooke's draft Official Community Plan, the Planetary Health Framework, alternative frameworks and the theory-based approach adopted in this thesis.

1.1 Current State of Environmental Crises and Threats to Human Life and Well-Being

Owing to the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, Earth is now characterized by human's novel ability to cause detrimental and catastrophic global environmental change (Rockström et al., 2009). Rockström and colleagues (2009) defined 'safe' levels of transgressions in different boundaries of Earth's natural systems, such as greenhouse gas emission, pollution and biodiversity loss and explained that Earth's planetary boundaries affect each other through 'tipping points'. Steffen et al. (2015) highlighted that climate change and biodiversity are the two most fundamental boundaries that have the biggest chance to cause these cascading outcomes, eroding Earth's habitability for all living things. The ability for Earth to sustain the human population is diminishing and "eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide" (United Nations, 2019; Whitmee et al., 2015). Richardson and colleagues (2023) have recently determined that six out of nine planetary boundaries have been transgressed and that Earth is now operating "outside of the safe operating space for humanity". During the preceding epoch known as the Holocene some 11,650 years ago, Earth's equilibrium state would have been conducive to human life for a couple thousand more years if anthropogenic damage were kept to a minimum (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). As a path forward, Whitmee and colleagues argued that societies ought to redefine prosperity to include all people's quality of life while respecting natural systems and that it is important to pursue "sustainable and equitable patterns of consumption, reducing population growth, and harnessing the power of technology for change" (p. 1974, 2015).

Both environmental challenges and determinants of human health must be addressed simultaneously, as the decline of Earth's health is coupled to the decline of human health (Whitmee et al., 2015). Climate change represents one of the greatest threats to human survival (Brousselle & McDavid, 2020). Climate change imposes cascading effects, including loss of habitation, poverty, mass migration, violent conflict and other negative social determinants of health (Watt et al., 2015). For example, greenhouse gas emissions and pollution alone are attributed to millions of annual avoidable deaths worldwide (Brousselle & McDavid, 2020). A recent study showed that pollinator loss from anthropogenic pressures causes around 427,000 premature deaths annually and globally (Smith et al., 2022). The issues we face are complicated by the tendency for one issue to affect another, where progress on one issue may exacerbate others that are not considered in the intervention. Harmful climate events, such as floods, polar vortexes and heat domes, disproportionately affect those with less capacity to adapt, whether at a

state or individual level, thereby further increasing pre-existing inequities (Brousselle & McDavid, 2020). Earth's population most at risk to climate events include individuals that are "the most disadvantaged and vulnerable," such as Indigenous peoples and farmers, as well as those living in economically disadvantaged countries and coastal and remote communities (Brousselle & McDavid, 2020, p192). While most evaluations occur within an organization or a particular sector, inequity flows over state borders, and we must evaluate interventions at international and domestic scales. As argued by Brousselle and McDavid, interventions ought to strive, not just for our basic needs, but for human welfare: "When basic needs are met, what matters most to increase happiness, health, and resilience is not the level of wealth, but welfare policies that reduce inequities" (2020, p.195).

Transformative change must include "a fundamental organization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values" (United Nations, 2019). It is clear that there is:

- The need for collaboration at every level (local, national, international, and global),
- The implementation of interventions that simultaneously target environmental challenges and determinants of human health, and
- The requirement for governments and organizations to adopt wholistic lenses in all interventions.

As the world's environmental crises wage on, Canadian municipalities are optimally positioned to implement wholistic interventions that support both nature and people.

1.2 The Role of Municipalities in Addressing the Current Environmental Crises

The global population living in urban areas has increased from 30% in 1950 to 55% in 2018, however, the trend in Canada is more: 73.7% of Canada's population reside in urban environments as of 2021 (United Nations, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2022). With increasing populations in urban communities, proper governance by local governments, such as low-carbon urban development strategies, are necessary and of increasing importance (Gouldson et al., 2015).

Since 2016, 2,359 jurisdictions have declared a climate emergency, which represent over 1 billion citizens globally (Climate Emergency Declaration, 2024; Cedamia, 2019). According to Climate Emergency Declaration in Canada, 653 jurisdictions from all levels representing 100% of the Canadian population have declared a climate emergency (Climate Emergency Declaration, 2024).

The potential for municipal governments to make beneficial change to environmental issues within our society is ripe, however, there are many "path dependent institutional structures,

organizational culture and policy-making procedures” that limit the development of effective policies (Burch, 2010, p. 287). Other examples of barriers to climate change adaptation include disorganization across levels of government, short electoral cycles and changing mandates (Dale et al., 2020).

Municipalities are directly implicated by large sources of emission, and they often are the first to feel the disastrous impacts related to climate change (Dale et al., 2020; Government of British Columbia, n.d.). Through better governance, municipalities can adapt their policies to benefit the environment and society.

As municipalities seek to make a difference in the fight for nature and human well-being, the District of Sooke is currently drafting an instrumental policy document with far reaching implications.

1.3 The Nature of the District of Sooke’s Official Community Plan

The District of Sooke’s Official Community Plan (OCP) is an optional bylaw under British Columbia’s *Local Government Act* (Government of British Columbia, 2024b). The OCP that is under development will guide decision-making and policies in Sooke until 2050 if adopted, replacing the previous OCP from 2010 (District of Sooke, 2023). The OCP will influence the “location, type and intensity of homes, businesses, industry, agriculture, parks and other public spaces” in Sooke (District of Sooke, 2023). Further, the OCP affects transportation options, housing availability and affordability, nature conservation or conversion, local economy and other tangible sectors under the municipality’s jurisdiction (District of Sooke, 2023).

The Sooke OCP seeks to align with the broader regional government’s policy framework: the Regional Growth Strategy (Capital Regional District, 2013). While considering the regional context, the OCP includes areas such as “budgeting, servicing, capital projects, and in the review of land use and development proposals” (District of Sooke, p.19, 2022). Additionally, the OCP covers the Zoning Bylaw, which is “a regulatory tool that is very specific about land use, density, where buildings are located on lots and how much lot they cover, and other issues such as landscaping” (District of Sooke, p.19, 2022).

The OCP applies to the whole Sooke municipal area and “supports areas of mutual understanding between the District of Sooke and T’Sou-ke Nation” (District of Sooke, p.19, 2022). The partnership with T’Sou-ke Nation was formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007 and represents a nation-to-nation relationship in areas of “provision of services, land use planning and development, heritage sites and cultural protection, shared and cross-boundary issues, shared services, and economic opportunities” (District of Sooke, p.23, 2022). T’Sou-ke Nation, as represented by the Te’mexw Treaty Association, is in modern treaty negotiations with the federal and provincial governments since 1994 regarding matters of governance, harvesting, lands, resources and fiscal issues (District of Sooke, 2022; Te’mexw Treaty Association, n.d.).

The Sooke OCP has three main goals: (1) Green and Net-zero, (2) Enjoyable and Distinct, and (3) Equitable and Respectful (Box 1; District of Sooke, p.48, 2022). Each numbered goal is supported by complementary policy objectives to implement the broader goals. The OCP also recognizes the need to be flexible in response to changing community needs.

Box 1: Sooke Official Community Plan Goals

Green and Net-zero

- 1) Mobilize to address the climate emergency head-on; achieve a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 2030, 60% reduction in GHGs by 2040, and net-zero GHGs by 2050.
- 2) Protect ecological areas for habitat and agricultural lands for farming, while focusing urban growth within the Town Centre.
- 3) Reduce car dependency and offer more transportation choices, with priority given to walking, cycling, transit use, and goods movement.
- 4) Create civic infrastructure and landscaping that is both high performing and delightful.
- 5) Expand and protect parks and green space throughout the community for the well-being of current and future generations.

Enjoyable and Distinct

- 1) Bolster streetscapes, homes and destinations in the Town Centre, the bustling heart of Sooke.
- 2) Protect and connect, physically and visibly, with the waterfront, the soul of Sooke. Keep it public.
- 3) Support and enjoy local food.
- 4) Treat streets as a place for people and public life.
- 5) Support existing local businesses, and encourage the establishment of new businesses and employment. Foster community economic development that respects ecological limits.
- 6) Elevate Sooke's dynamic arts and culture scene.

Equitable and Respectful

- 1) Commit to addressing the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, including their rights to the land, territories, and resources.
- 2) Keep Sooke affordable; provide housing choices for all.
- 3) Equally honour diverse identities and lived experiences – including those of equity-seeking people – in services, public spaces, and the built environment.
- 4) Create a safe and resilient community for all.

Under the first main goal, Green and Net-zero, Sooke is working towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions, diverting developments away from wildlife habitats and farms to the town core, enhancing access to, and quality of, non-car travel methods, creating high performing and enjoyable civic infrastructure, and expansion, as well as protection, of green spaces and parks for human wellbeing.

Under the second main goal, Enjoyable and Distinct, Sooke strives to enhance the quality of the Town Centre, ensure the waterfront area remains public, protected and connected, support local

food businesses, make streets a public gathering place, support the business economy while respecting ecological limits, and encourage Sooke’s arts and culture.

Under the third main goal, Equitable and Respectful, Sooke envisions a community where inherent Indigenous rights to land, territory and resources are respectfully addressed, all income groups can afford housing, the diversity of people are honored, and Sooke residents feel safe and resilient.

While partnering with governments, organizations, T’Sou-ke Nation, businesses and the community, Sooke seeks to deliver on the OCP’s goals by ensuring budgetary and future development considerations are aligned with the OCP (District of Sooke, 2022).

Given the OCP’s breadth and depth of influences within Sooke and this thesis’s timely review during the OCP’s draft stages, a wholistic theory-based framework was applied.

1.4 Planetary Health Framework

The PHF (Figure 1), developed by Brousselle and McDavid (2020), is a dialogic heuristics method to evaluate and design government interventions while promoting global sustainability and adopting an integrated human (i.e., social, economic and political components) and natural (i.e., planetary boundaries of human activity) systems perspective. The PHF’s objective in the context of the current thesis lies in transforming policy-making procedures at the local government level through aiding in better policy decisions. The PHF promotes awareness for human and natural dimensions simultaneously and equally (Brousselle & McDavid, 2021).

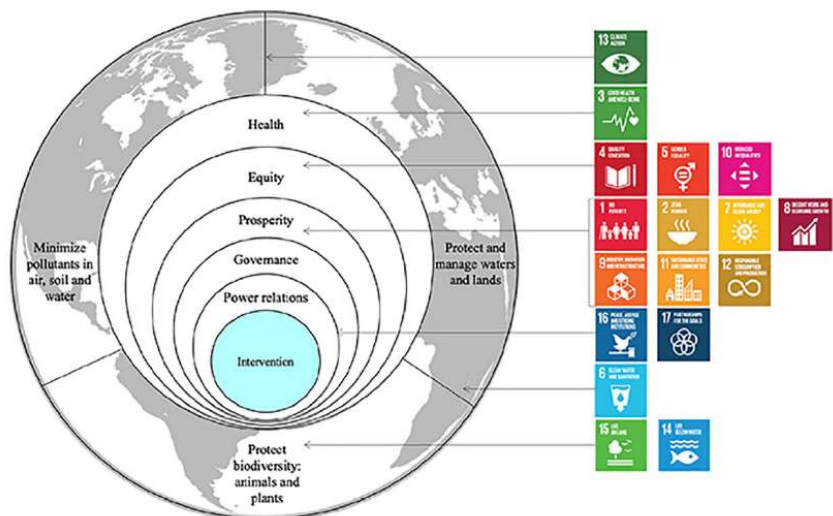


Figure 1 - The Planetary Health Framework (Brousselle & McDavid, 2021)

[The PHF] allows us to embrace, heuristically, the complexity of our planetary health challenges and to contribute to changing the discourse to better reflect the necessary ecological transition: instead of seeing the ecological transition as a constraint, it can constitute an amazing opportunity to reinvent our societies for environmental, social, and health betterment (Brousselle & McDavid, 2021, p.12).

The framework is broadly composed of the natural system and the human system, and altogether comprised of 8 dimensions (Table 1). The natural system component of the PHF is based on the “safe operating space” model by Rockström et al. (2009), which includes considerations for climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone depletion, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles (biogeochemical flows), global freshwater use, change in land use, biodiversity loss, atmospheric aerosol loading and chemical pollution. For simplicity, natural dimensions under the framework are pollution, waters and lands and biodiversity. The objective in the natural system is to minimize sources of harmful chemicals to the biosphere while protecting, conserving and regenerating Earth’s biological and ecological diversity.

The human system component of the PHF include prosperity, equity, health, governance and power relations (Brousselle & McDavid, 2020). The human dimensions of the PHF represents our ability to successfully implement beneficial interventions to raise human welfare for all, while making progress on social, equity and political goals.

While the eight dimensions are separated in the PHF, each are connected where affecting one will affect another. These linkages require any planetary health related intervention to consider all PHF dimensions simultaneously. The PHF and related tools are applicable to all interventions, flexible to local contexts and easy to use (Brousselle et al., 2024). In addition to Table 1, relevant questions to each PHF dimension was adopted and is available in Annex 5 (Brousselle & McDavid, 2021).

Wholistic approaches with multiple simultaneous consideration like the PHF is a novel approach to evaluating interventions and no exact alternatives exist to date. However, a similar alternative includes the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIAs), which are conducted by provincial and federal agencies in Canada (Brousselle et al., 2024). EIAs are done before an industry project is approved to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are avoided and mitigated (Brousselle et al., 2024). HIAs are done on non-health care sector projects to prevent and minimize harm while promoting benefits to humans (Brousselle et al., 2024).

Canada and many other governments are combining EIAs with HIAs, however, the assessments’ scope is rigid and many projects and decisions impacting humans and nature may not receive wholistic evaluations (Brousselle et al., 2024). There is a large gap between established evaluative methods and government expectations, especially as recent legislation requires the use of wholistic assessments, such as for the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in British Columbia and the requirements for gender-based and climate change analysis in federal Treasury Board submissions (Brousselle et al., 2024).

Decision making frameworks, such as the PHF, could apply to federal and provincial/territorial governments, given political will, which could promote greater planetary health benefits in

health care, education, fisheries management, immigration and many other sectors. In the next section, other similar frameworks to the PHF are discussed.

Table 1 - Key Considerations by Each Dimension of the Planetary Health Framework (Adapted from Brousselle & McDavid, 2021)

Systems	Dimensions	Key Considerations
Natural	Pollution	What pollutions (e.g., CO ₂ , contaminants, etc.) and their effects are attributable to the intervention (e.g., Sooke OCP)? Are there alternative interventions that pollute less?
	Waters and Lands	What is the intervention's effect on the conservation and restoration of waters (e.g., rivers, watersheds, ocean) and lands (natural land cover, wetlands, forests)? Are there alternative interventions that conserve and restore waters and lands more?
	Biodiversity	What is the intervention's effect on biodiversity? Are there alternative interventions that further conserve and restore biodiversity?
Human	Prosperity	What is the intervention's effects on economy and social capital at the individual and community levels? Are there alternative interventions that increase economy and social capital?
	Equity	Is the intervention inclusive of individual and community diversity (e.g., sex, gender, identity, race, culture, age, religion, ability, etc.)? Are there alternative interventions that include more diversity?
	Health	What is the intervention's effects on health (i.e., mental and physical health) at the individual, community and population levels? Are there alternative interventions that increase health?
	Governance	Is the intervention supported by a coordinated governance system (e.g., District of Sooke, Capital Regional District)? Are there alternative interventions that are more coordinated?
	Power Relations	Who seeks to benefit the most from the intervention? Are there alternative interventions that are more equitable?

1.5 Alternatives to the Planetary Health Framework

A similar approach to the PHF includes the Doughnut Economics Framework (DEF), which was first published in 2012 (Figure 2; Raworth, 2017). While additional similar frameworks exist, such as One Health and EcoHealth (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024; Conservation Ontario, 2024), the DEF was chosen and compared with the PHF, as these two frameworks were the most similar in scope. Both the DEF and the PHF strive to achieve similar goals, which is to improve our prospects of surviving on Earth for as long as possible while raising the living standards for all.

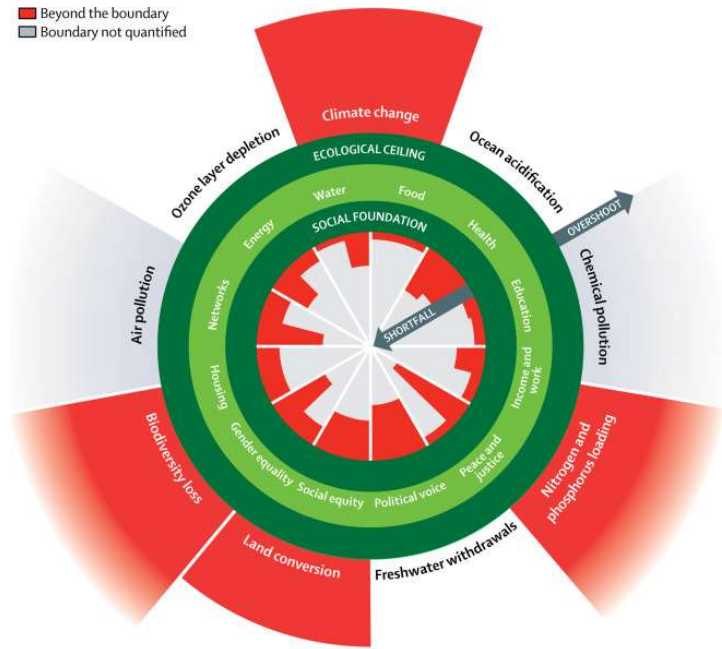


Figure 2 - Doughnut of Social and Planetary Boundaries Model (Raworth, 2017)

Although the dimensions represented in the DEF are like the dimensions in the PHF, the DEF has upper and lower limits and advocates for interventions to balance the two limits. Upper limits represent the ecological ceiling, which we must operate under to prevent overshooting Earth’s planetary boundaries and causing cascading environmental disasters (e.g., ocean acidification, biodiversity loss, climate change). The lower limit represents the social foundation and basic requirement for individual qualities of life (e.g., housing, gender equality, peace and justice, education). The DEF has resonance with the PHF, however, they differ in applicability and flexibility.

While the PHF puts emphasis on the determinants of human well-being and environmental sustainability, the DEF addresses the major sectors that may matter the most for society, such as education, health and energy. This difference in focus might lead to reaching different audiences, jurisdictions and evaluators. Some municipalities in Europe have complete jurisdiction over the education system, or the organization of care, which is not the case in Canada. For example, the city of Amsterdam has adopted the DEF in 2020 as a tool for transformative action (Raworth, 2020). This might make the DEF more relevant in Canada for federal and provincial governments that have broader jurisdictions, but less relevant for local governments that are primarily concerned with land-use decisions. The PHF can be adapted to any kind of project, program or policy and can be used for any type of organization.

Given the PHF’s unique comparative merits of applicability, flexibility and ease of implementation, the PHF was chosen over the DEF in the current study and formed the basis for

evaluating the District of Sooke's OCP. A theory-based approach was adopted to support the evaluation of the OCP through the PHF.

1.6 Theory-Based Approaches to Planetary Health

Recently, Brousselle et al. (2022) published an article describing how a theory-based approach could be used to analyze any type of interventions using planetary health lenses, program theory and logic models.

Theory-based evaluation includes the use of “a validated model that will enable a judgement to be made on the intervention being evaluated,” which is also called a program theory (Brousselle & Buregeya, 2018). Program theory can be defined as “the mechanisms that mediate between the delivery (and receipt) of the program and the emergence of the outcomes of interest” (Weiss, 1998). It is important to be explicit about how and why an intervention is expected to lead to a given result by thoroughly explaining and testing the program theory. The model should be validated in collaboration with subject matter experts and interested parties, such as, in this case, the District of Sooke and Sooke residents. In ensuring a robust theory of change is elucidated, the researcher requires thoughtfulness and strategic thinking in the context surrounding the intervention (Brousselle & Buregeya, 2018).

Theory-based evaluation mainly covers three types of evaluations: logic analysis, contribution analysis and realist evaluation (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011). Through the use of a logic model, logic analysis examines the relationship between the program's goals and the selected policy tools, all the while identifying contextual factors (e.g., resistance to change), which influence the program outcomes (Brousselle & Buregeya, 2018). With logic analysis there is an emphasis on understanding the essential characteristics of the interventions and its alternatives, as well as the critical conditions wherein the interventions lie, which either lead to, or stray away from, the desired goals (Brousselle & Buregeya, 2018). This type of analysis allows for causal pathways, which are the cause and effect of social interventions from the policy objectives and its tools, to become explicit, as causal pathways “may be observable, or else discernible but not always perceptible, or even hidden” (Brousselle & Buregeya, p159, 2018). Contribution analysis is a research design for conducting effect analysis, while realist evaluation corresponds to an implementation analysis (Brousselle & Buregeya, 2018). These evaluation designs are a few within the many ways to scrutinize and improve programs, policies and frameworks.

The application of the PHF brings specific lenses to elucidate the program theory and suggest improvements prior, during or after implementing the intervention. While logic analysis focuses on the plausibility of the intervention to reach the intended effects of the intervention, this new approach focuses the analysis on the broader impacts of the intervention on the environmental and human systems.

Municipalities are well-positioned to implement actions that address the diverse environmental and social challenges facing Canadian communities. Wholistic frameworks are now available to

support the simultaneous consideration of multiple critical dimensions. However, a shift in current municipal practices is necessary to design policies that can positively impact these various dimensions.

While there are limited resources and constraints, OCPs have the potential to address these challenges holistically if they are designed to consider multiple dimensions from the outset. This study aimed to highlight the potential of the Sooke OCP to address social and environmental challenges in a comprehensive and positive manner.

2. Research Objectives

This thesis's purpose is to evaluate the Sooke OCP using the Planetary Health Framework (Brousselle et al., 2022). The thesis seeks to determine if and under what conditions the Sooke OCP could potentially contribute to planetary health, including considerations for the OCP's strengths, risks and recommendations. This approach uses a theory-based approach and involves the following steps:

1. Developing a logic model of the Official Community Plan in the context of the Planetary Health Framework,
2. Assessing the program theory against the eight dimensions of the Planetary Health Framework, and
3. Identifying areas of strengths, risks and recommendations with regards to the potential impacts on the human and natural systems of the Planetary Health Framework.

3. Methodology & Methods

This section details the methodology and mixed methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative data) employed in assessing the Sooke OCP against the PHF, including the formulation of the logic model, the design of the focus groups, the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data, the validity of research, as well as the limitations of research. Approval from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board was obtained prior to commencing participant recruitment (Annex 6).

3.1 Methodology & Conceptual Model

Figure 3 represents the methodology of this thesis and how feedback gathered from Sooke residents participating in focus groups may inform a revised version of the OCP that better aligns with planetary health. Official documents describing the goals and mechanisms of the OCP were used to develop the model, which were available on official District of Sooke websites, including the 2022 draft of the Sooke OCP that was the basis of this study (District of Sooke, 2022). No other official District of Sooke documentation was used in the construction of the conceptual model, as the 2022 draft OCP was the version recommended by a Councillor in the District. The researcher presented this methodology to focus group participants to contextualize this thesis and the participants' roles within the study.

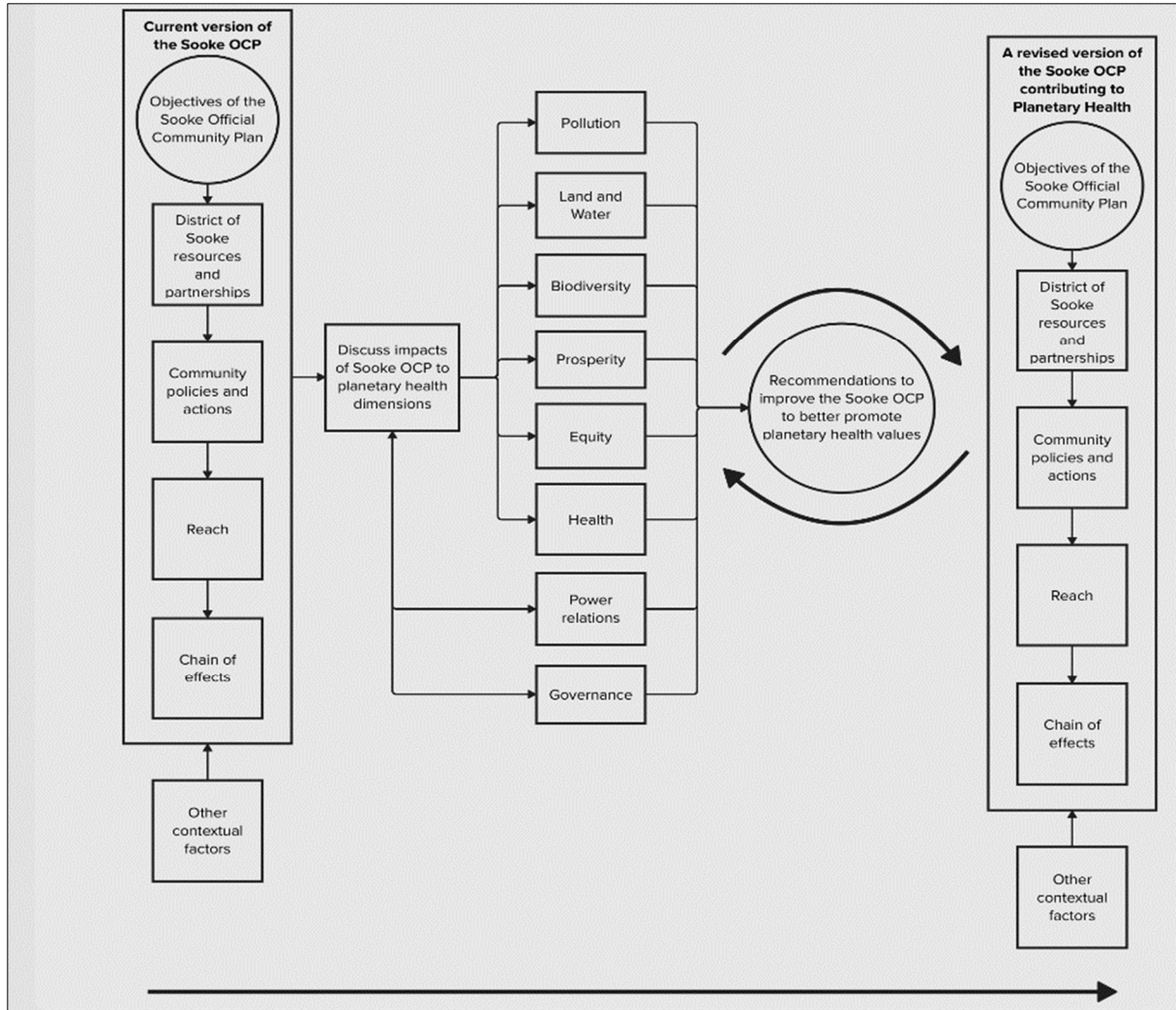


Figure 3 – Conceptual Model of the District of Sooke’s Official Community Plan in the Context of the Planetary Health Framework

3.2 Desktop Analysis of the Sooke Official Community Plan

Initially, the study planned to create a logic model of the Sooke OCP to elucidate the program theory through interviews with District officials in refining the model. However, the District was not available in this capacity and given the complexity of the OCP in relation to its multiple layers of goals and sector-specific policies and actions, a detailed analysis of the August 2022 draft (District of Sooke, 2022) OCP’s policies and actions was conducted instead. This analysis sought to help participants better understand the OCP and enrich focus group discussions.

The OCP’s 329 policies and actions were linked to several layers of goals (i.e., Goal Areas, Goals, Complementary Policy Objectives and Community Policies). Some policies and actions were duplicated due to being linked to one or more goals. Duplications were removed to allow further analysis of unique policies and actions, now totaling 196.

Given the significant number of policies and actions, all 196 unique policies and actions were coded by the researcher with support from the thesis supervisor. The resulting categorized items were compared and discussed between the researcher and supervisor. Coded unique policies and actions were summarized in a table, with a sample policy or action as an example, and provided to focus group participants (Annex 4). Proportions of each grouping was calculated against the total number of unique policy or action for each Community Policy (e.g., Agriculture and Food Systems). The policies and actions were then organized by Community Policy and sorted from most to least number of unique policies and actions.

3.3 Focus Group and Questionnaire Design

While the OCP was developed by the District of Sooke without specific consideration for the PHF, focus groups were conducted to assess the program theory of the OCP against the PHF. Participants provided opinions on how they felt or thought about the effects of the OCP in the context of the PHF. This study solicited participants across a range of sectors that could speak to the various dimensions of the PHF (i.e., through representation across sectors), which advocated for, and empowered, the community's diverse voices and lived experiences.

Participants were solicited through Facebook, word-of-mouth and posters on local bulletin boards. Participants had to be Sooke residents and were selected based on their identities and professional/voluntary associations, as rich knowledge is generated when participants are among "people like themselves" (Table 2; Krueger, 2014, p.3). The identities of the focus groups (Table 2) were designed in a way to speak to the different dimensions of the PHF and included:

1. Social Group,
2. Nature and Wellness Group,
3. Business Group,
4. Governance Group, and
5. District of Sooke Group.

Participants were asked to declare their identities and professional/voluntary associations before being placed in one of five groups, given the inclusion and exclusion criteria established per group (Table 2). While 5-10 participants per group were sought for effective group dynamics and opinion sharing (Krueger, 2014), and many more individuals identified their interests in participating in the study, 2-4 unique participants attended each group. A total of 17 individuals from five different sectors in Sooke signed consent forms and participated in the study between June and August, 2024. Demographic data of the participants were not gathered.

Materials were developed and used to facilitate the focus groups, including an agenda ([Annex 1](#)), presentation ([Annex 2](#)) anonymous questionnaire ([Annex 3](#)) and OCP policies and actions summary handout ([Annex 4](#)). Within the presentations, the researcher provided a robust overview of the OCP to participants. Participants were shown Figures 4 and 5, which promoted a detailed understanding of the OCP, such as its structure, the diversity of policies and actions and

proportions represented in Community Policy areas. Each focus group was presented with the same materials and questions, which also included information on the PHF and the study’s logic model. Participants were asked four main discussion questions during focus groups:

- How likely is it that the OCP will achieve its objectives?
- What do you see as the key strengths of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?
- What do you perceive as the pitfalls or challenges of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?
- Do you think the OCP has the potential to make Sooke a greater contributor to Planetary Health? Explain your point of view.

Participants were given time at the end of the focus group to fill out anonymous questionnaires, which provided an avenue to voice all opinions, if participants felt they could not share during the focus group. Each question asked participants to rate (from -3 to 3) the perception of the OCP in promoting each PHF dimension. For example, if a participant selected -3 for pollution, this indicated that they felt the implementation of the OCP would significantly pollute Sooke’s air, soil and water, whereas 3 would indicate that the OCP significantly reduces pollution. All scores on each question held the same logic and directionality where larger numbers meant greater contribution to planetary health, and vice versa. Each PHF dimension was allotted space for additional written comments. For clarity, all opinions collected from participants represented the beliefs of a group of Sooke residents with some being experts in their respective fields, while others lack subject matter expertise, relying on their lived experiences instead.

One individual from the District of Sooke Group was interviewed separately from the other two District of Sooke Group participants due to logistics and scheduling conflicts. Data from both District of Sooke sessions were amalgamated under the group and in the results.

While the District of Sooke Group preferred business hours, all other focus groups took place outside of regular business hours. Participants did not receive payment to participate in the study. Although the study sought to include the T’sou-ke Nation as one of the focus groups, they were not able to participate due to capacity and timing concerns.

Table 2 - The Five Focus Groups Conducted to Inform the Official Community Plan’s Strengths and Risks to the Planetary Health Framework (Total Participants = 17 Individuals)

Focus group name	Constituent groups	Rationale	Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
Social group (4 participants)	Equity groups, such as black, Indigenous, person of color (BIPOC) and	To obtain feedback based on lived experience with social issues that	Inclusion: paid/unpaid titles in social groups or organizations.

	2SLGBTQIA+ individuals.	affect visible and non-visible minorities.	Exclusion: none.
Nature and Wellness Group (2 participants)	Biodiversity advocates and organizations.	To enlist opinions from subject matter experts on the OCP's effects on Sooke's ecosystem health and biodiversity.	Inclusion: paid or unpaid titles in nature groups/organizations. Exclusion: none.
Business Group (4 participants)	Business owners Builders and developers	To understand the OCP's effects on Sooke's financial prosperity and economy.	Inclusion: title holders in relevant organizations. Exclusion: Individuals who do not hold relevant titles, qualifications or experiences.
Governance Group (4 participants)	Members of the public involved with the OCP (e.g., public committee of the OCP)	To understand the intention of the OCP and public feedback.	Inclusion: individuals frequently engaged on the OCP. Exclusion: individuals who do not hold relevant qualifications or experiences.
District of Sooke Group (3 participants)	District of Sooke public servants. Elected officials (e.g., Mayor, Counsellors)	To understand the intention of the OCP, as designed by public servants and elected officials.	Inclusion: titles in the District of Sooke Exclusion: individuals who do not hold relevant titles.

3.4 Analysis of Focus Group Data

Data from focus groups included a transcript of the audio recordings and questionnaire responses. Each two-hour focus group generated approximately 60 pages of transcript, totaling approximately 300 pages of qualitative data for all five focus groups. Questionnaire's provided quantitative scores and written comments on the alignment of the OCP with each PHF dimension (Annex 3).

Focus group transcriptions and qualitative written responses from questionnaires were first sorted for relevance to the PHF and OCP, removing approximately 50% of transcript data as beyond the scope of the study. Next, transcript data from each focus group was thematically coded by the relevant PHF dimension and the name of the originating focus group. Each focus

group's responses was synthesized by major points of agreement by each PHF dimension. Key perspectives from each group were compared among the groups.

The same data was then synthesized by PHF dimension, no longer grouping by focus group. This involved synthesizing all relevant opinions for each PHF dimension inclusive of all focus groups. This promoted a well-rounded understanding of the strengths and risks of each dimension owing to the diverse lived experiences represented in the focus groups. A list of opportunities for a better Sooke informed by participant opinions were developed.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires supported the creation of figures showing public perception of the OCP's policies and actions relative to the PHF's dimensions. Figures derived from the questionnaires were generated to complement both portrayals of the results, including by focus groups and by PHF dimensions.

3.5 Research Validity

Internal research validity is a measure of the accuracy behind the methodology in measuring the object of research (Patino & Ferreira, 2018), which in this study, is the Sooke OCP's degree of alignment to the dimensions of the PHF. This study promoted internal validity through:

- The formulation of a logic model of the OCP, which shows the program theory of the OCP and potential outcomes of the recommendations arising out of the focus groups (i.e., in support of a revised OCP that better contributes to planetary health).
- A rich mix of identities and professional/voluntary associations in focus groups that captured a wide range of opinions and lived beliefs,
- A systematic process of transcription and thematic coding, ensuring equal representation and valuing of opinions used in the formulation of the results.

Risks to the study included certain participants dominating focus group discussions, reducing the contributions of quieter participants in the results. This may lead to data skew where dominant voices shape the majority opinions provided by focus groups. To empower reserved participants, the researcher set the rules of engagement (Annex 2), facilitated and empowered quieter participants, such as frequently providing quieter participants opportunities to speak, and provided the option to write their opinions independently – the anonymous questionnaires provided an avenue to voice all opinions, if participants felt they could not share during the focus group.

An additional risk included the potential to incite bias on the participants' independent thoughts due to the researcher's representation of the Sooke OCP during the focus group presentations. However, given the OCP is a significantly large document with many policies and actions, as well as complex linkages throughout the document, it was unrealistic to rely on pre-existing knowledge when asking participants to assess the OCP. Providing a neutral characterization of the OCP allowed participants to react to concrete examples, as opposed to basing their opinions

on abstract thoughts. The researcher endeavored to provide information to participants in a neutral way without bias toward any given sector (e.g., environment vs. housing).

3.6 Research Limitations

Bill 44, formally known as the *Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023*, was a significant piece of legislation enacted by the BC government to address the housing crisis in the province. The primary goal of this bill was to increase housing density and affordability by making changes to zoning regulations and development processes. BC Government's new legislation has placed new requirements on the District of Sooke, including on their draft OCP. Given the study's analysis are based on the August 2022 version of the draft OCP, upcoming changes to the OCP imposed by the provincial government may not be fully reflected in the data and results of this study. For clarity, any new changes to the draft OCP due to Bill 44 are not captured in this thesis's data or results, as this thesis is based on the August 2022 draft OCP, which precedes Bill 44.

This thesis hoped for T'sou-ke Nation's valuable input into the current evaluation. However, the perspectives of the nation were not part of the thesis due to their internal priorities and constraints, despite their willingness to participate.

As the draft OCP was a lengthy and complex document, it is unreasonable to expect a significant level of comprehension of the OCP and its policies and actions by all focus group participants. While the researcher endeavored to communicate key policies and actions, the plan's lay out, among other important issues, the data obtained for this study is constrained by each participant's familiarity with the OCP.

Although the focus group design included medical professionals within the Nature and Wellness Group, no medical professionals were able to participate in the study. This posed a limitation to the study, such that the opinions of the medical community were not incorporated into the results of the thesis.

4. Results

This section presents the results of an analysis on the OCP and focus groups, including results by focus groups, highlighting key issues of agreement and disagreement between groups, and by each dimension of the PHF, including strengths and risks of the OCP in aligning with planetary health.

4.1 Desktop Analysis of the District of Sooke's Official Communtiy Plan

Figure 4 shows the OCP's tangible policies and actions (i.e., 96), which are palpable and concrete, and non-tangible policies and actions (i.e., 93), which are abstract, vague and not easily measurable (e.g., language such as to engage, discuss and meet with...), as well as T'sou-ke Nation policies and actions (i.e., 16), which implicate the nation. There was overlap within the coded policies and actions, as some items, for example, can overlap the categories of tangible and T'sou-ke Nation, which indicates that a policy or action is implicating T'sou-ke Nation while being tangible.

By understanding what can be measured, the public may understand the implementation status of the tangible policies and actions and hold the District accountable to their commitments in the OCP. While tangible policies and actions are important for public accountability, non-tangible policies and actions are also critical in delivering the OCP's commitments. Non-tangible policies and actions often involved conversations with key partners in furthering an important initiative for the community, such as Action 4.7.4.6 that seeks to “collaborate with new immigrant, training and employment organizations to support incoming workforce” (District of Sooke, 2022). Without non-tangible policies and actions, the tangible counterparts may not succeed.

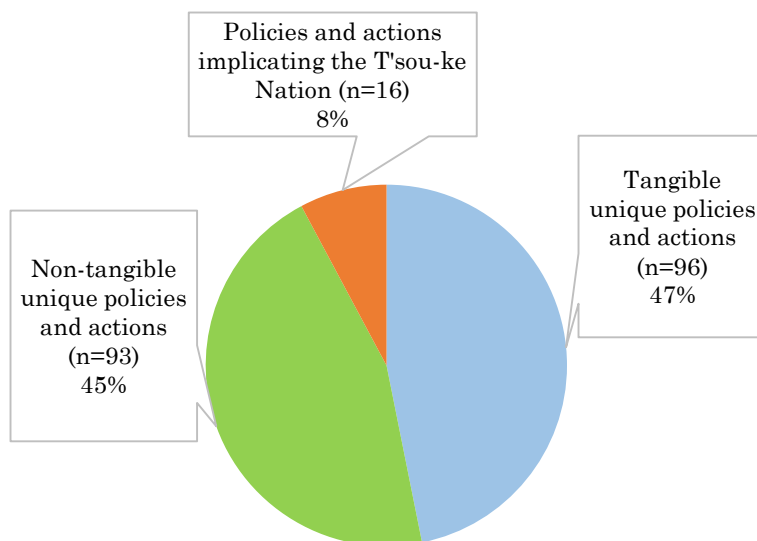


Figure 4 - The Official Community Plan's Unique Policies and Actions, Categorized by Tangible, Non-Tangible and T'sou-ke Nation

Figure 5 shows that Natural Environment and Housing have the most policies and actions while Green Building and Trails have the least. Arts and Culture did not have any tangible policies and actions. Housing had the highest proportion of non-tangible policies to tangible policies.

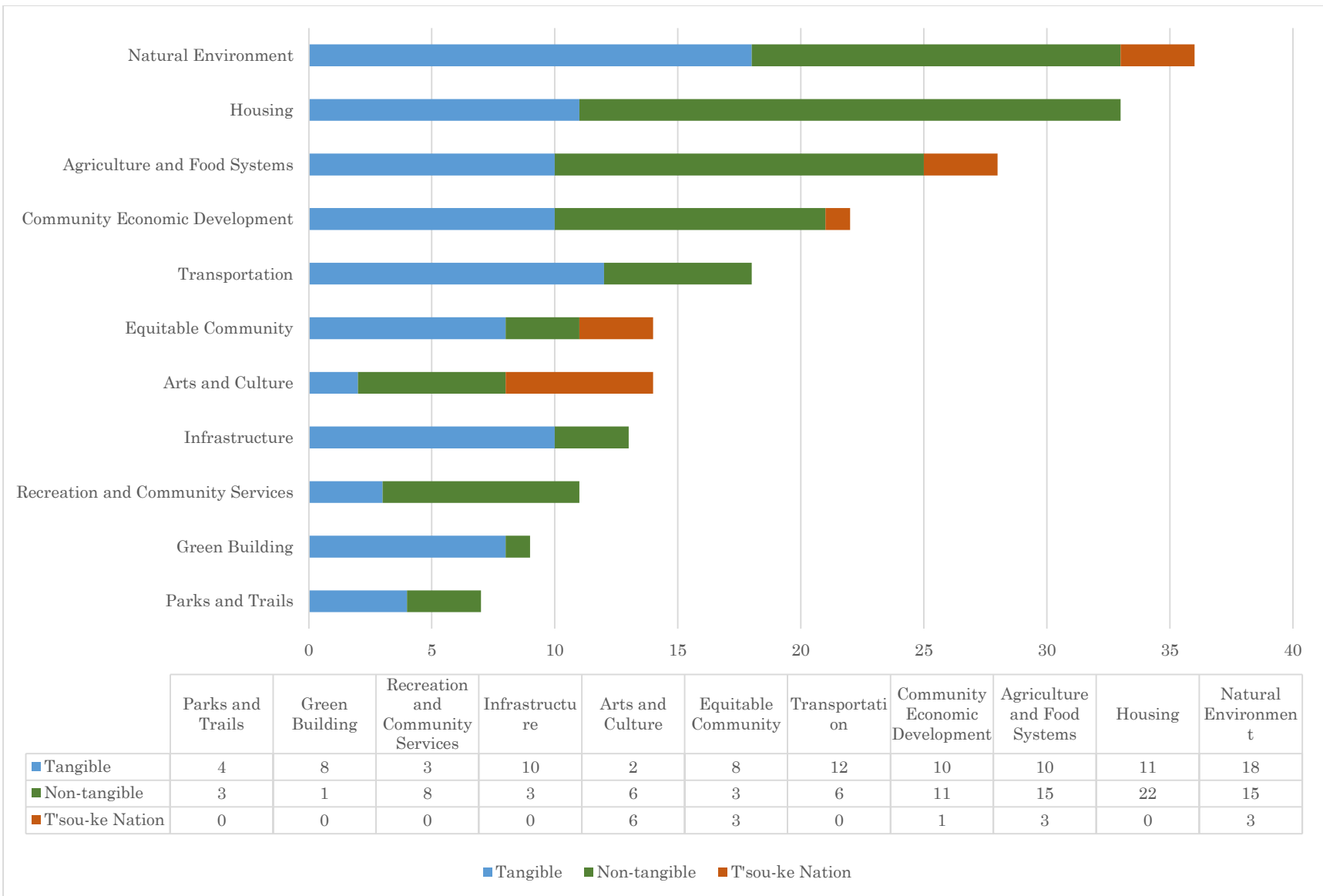


Figure 5 - Numbers of Unique Policies and Actions from the Official Community Plan Sorted Most to Least by Community Policy

4.2 Results by Focus Groups

The following section provides the results from each focus group, addressing each of the eight PHF dimensions. The five focus groups included the Social Group, Nature and Wellness Group, Business Group, Governance Group and District of Sooke Group. A snapshot of the questionnaire results are presented by group as well. By analyzing the responses of each group and determining areas of agreement and disagreement between groups, this section may support efforts to determine priorities within the work of the District while ensuring sector-specific needs are not forgotten.

4.2.1 SOCIAL GROUP

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Figure 6 shows a snapshot of all questionnaire responses by the Social Group (n=4). Pollution, biodiversity, waters and lands, and prosperity were dimensions that at least three quarters of participants saw the OCP contributing to planetary health. Equity, health and governance were dimensions that at least three quarters of participants saw the OCP demoting planetary health. All participants expressed strong concerns for power relations. Generally, the OCP's measures for nature and prosperity were perceived well by the Social Group, however, most human dimensions were perceived negatively, especially power relations.

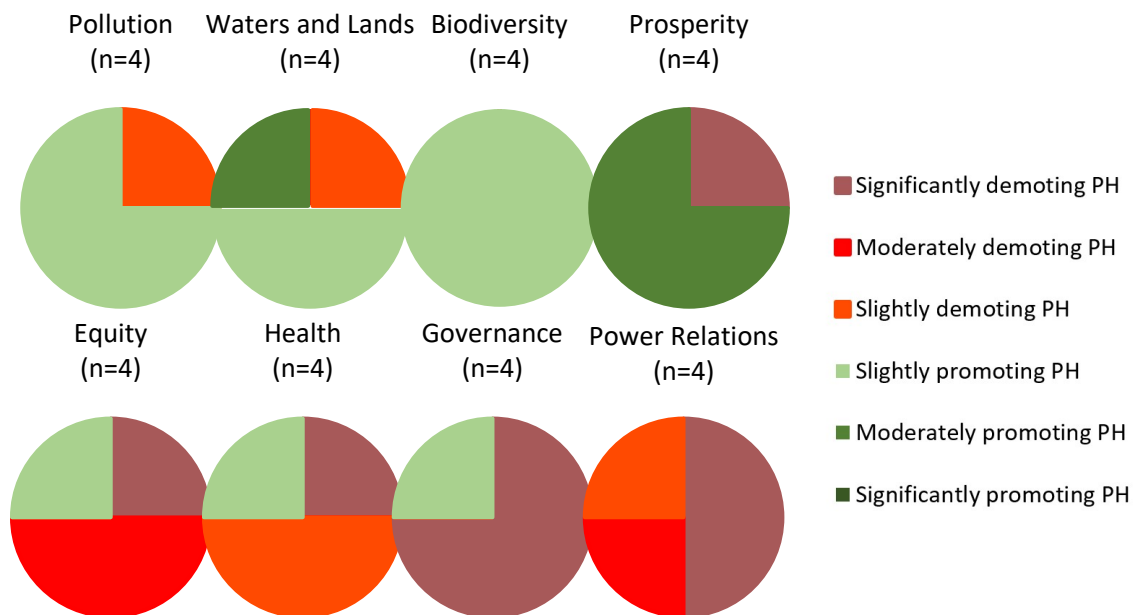


Figure 6 - Snapshot of Questionnaire Responses from The Social Group

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE SOCIAL GROUP

The Social Group emphasized the delicate balance between economic development and environmental preservation. They noted that pollution reduction efforts can be costly and sometimes lead to unintended consequences. The group also highlighted the community's dilemma of balancing new residents with preserving green spaces, particularly as development pressures threaten biodiversity.

Many in the group expressed the need for a more diverse economy and stronger community focus in Sooke. A participant stated that “the local economy seems very homogenous.” Another added that

“the District was supposed to set up little nodal commercial developments down in Saseenos [an area within Sooke], out past the post office, other places. So then neighborhoods would have a little corner store and a little coffee shop and a gathering place so you don't have to come into the middle of Sooke, and you don't have to drive to be able to get there.”

However, they recognized the challenges in implementing the OCP due to a lack of amenities and resources. A participant noted that “we're understaffed, we have no money in the town.”

Participants also pointed out the OCP's lack of focus on equity and inclusion, particularly for marginalized communities. One argued: “the OCP does not name groups who are marginalized, so how can you design for equity if there's no target population?”

Additionally, they expressed concerns about inadequate health services, especially for young people, and the challenges in OCP implementation due to a lack of clarity, coordination, and resources.

To address these challenges, the group suggested prioritizing community needs and engaging T'sou-ke Nation in decision-making. They also proposed exploring public-private partnerships to alleviate the financial burden of implementing the OCP and providing essential services. The group further emphasized the importance of developing a sustainable economic model that balances economic growth with environmental protection and social equity.

By proactively addressing these challenges, the Social Group believed that Sooke can build a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable community for all its residents.

4.2.2 NATURE AND WELLNESS GROUP

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Figure 7 shows a snapshot of all questionnaire responses by the Nature and Wellness Group (n=2). Due to the small group size, it was difficult to obtain a consensus and a cohesive perspective. However, the group agreed on the OCP's measures for biodiversity as slightly contributing to planetary health. The group felt strong concerns around governance as being a

serious risk to planetary health. Power relations received both significant support and significant opposition. The two participants agreed that there is much room for improvement in equity. Except for biodiversity, the Nature and Wellness Group generally rated all dimensions negatively.

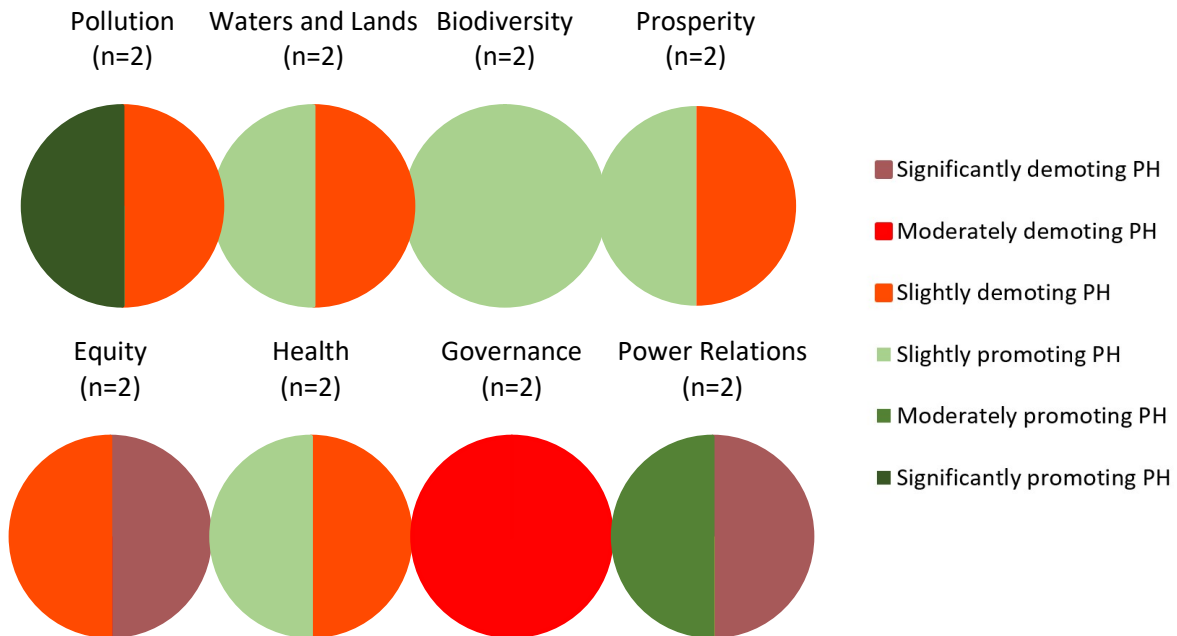


Figure 7 - Snapshot of Questionnaire Responses from The Nature and Wellness Group

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE NATURE AND WELLNESS GROUP

The Nature and Wellness Group expressed deep concern about the OCP's potential environmental and community impacts. While acknowledging the plan's inclusion of pollution prevention measures, they questioned their implementation and effectiveness. The group noted that, despite the OCP's land and water protections, these were often undermined by a lack of supporting municipal legislation and enforcement.

Participants also voiced doubts about the OCP's commitment to biodiversity, citing a lack of specific actions and timelines. While the plan emphasized creating a thriving town, the group felt it lacked tangible measures to promote prosperity. They further argued that the OCP's discussions of equity were not backed by concrete actions to address disparities.

The group recognized the OCP's foundational approach to health but stressed the importance of implementation and measurement. They highlighted the challenges in realizing the OCP's vision, citing political will and accountability as significant obstacles. They argued that the OCP was influenced by economic interests, disenfranchising citizens and marginalized communities. One participant stated:

“The process of shutting down the OCP to deal with the economic interests of a segment of the community (developers and builders) disempowered, discouraged and disenfranchised citizens and ignored marginalized communities”.

Furthermore, the OCP's focus on economic development has raised concerns about potential environmental harm. Participants worried that short-term economic gains might outweigh long-term environmental sustainability, leading to irreversible damage to ecosystems and natural resources.

The OCP's implementation has also been hindered by a lack of public engagement and transparency. Participants have expressed frustration with limited opportunities to participate in decision-making processes and access to information about the OCP's plans and initiatives. They argued this lack of public involvement has eroded trust in the OCP and compromised its effectiveness.

4.2.3 BUSINESS GROUP

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Figure 8 shows a snapshot of all questionnaire responses by the Business Group (n=4). Some participants did not provide answers in the questionnaire, citing a lack of knowledge to make informed decisions. At least three quarters of participants believed that all dimensions would contribute to planetary health. The most contentious dimensions included health and power relations. There was significant support for the OCP's pollution measures significantly contributing to planetary health. Except for pollution, which received significant support, most dimensions generally received positive reviews from the Business Group.

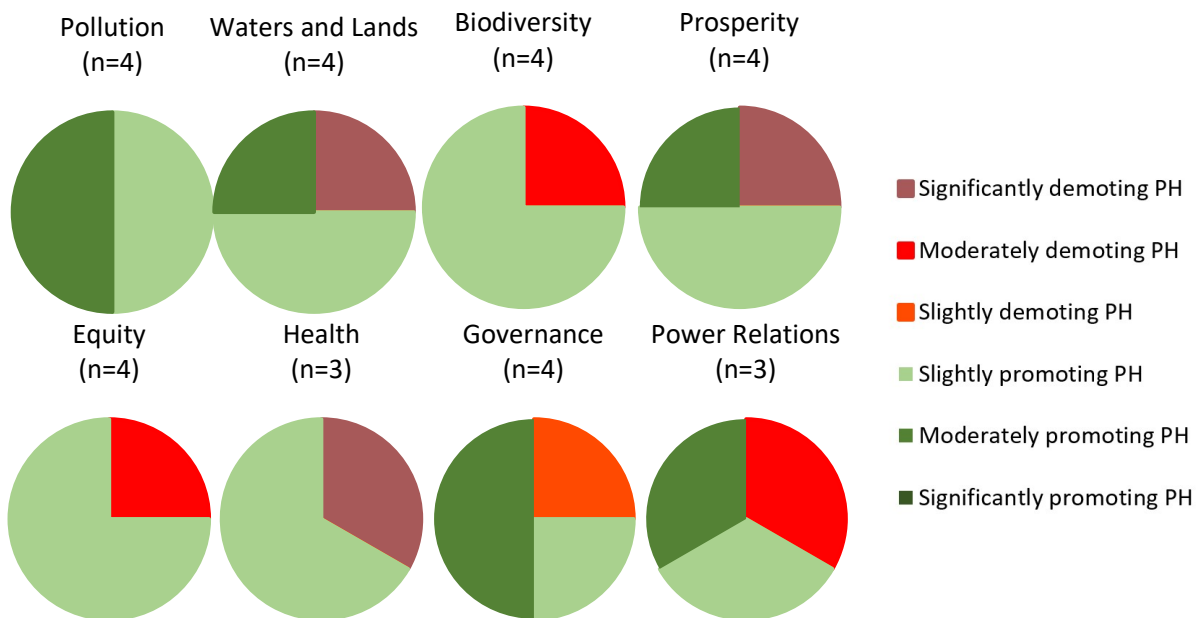


Figure 8 - Snapshot of Questionnaire Responses from The Business Group

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE BUSINESS GROUP

Business Group participants expressed a strong desire to reduce pollution in their local waters by expanding the sewer system. They also emphasized the importance of preserving the region's natural ecosystems and biodiversity, recognizing the critical role these play in maintaining the area's ecological balance.

To boost economic prosperity, participants desired further local job opportunities, which would reduce the need for commuting to neighboring cities. They advocated for a more diverse range of commercial activities and supported local businesses, recognizing their vital role in stimulating the local economy. Additionally, they expressed a keen interest in attracting more tourists to Sooke, believing that this would bolster the local economy and contribute to the overall vitality of the community. However, participants raised concerns about the affordability of housing in Sooke, recognizing the need for more accessible options to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live and work in the community.

While there was support for Indigenous inclusion, concerns were raised about the OCP's effectiveness in addressing Indigenous rights and perspectives. To create a more equitable and vibrant community, the group advocated for a diverse range of cultural activities and events.

They desired a community where everyone has equal opportunities and access to resources, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The OCP itself came under criticism for being complex and inaccessible. Participants called for a simpler, more understandable document that truly reflects the community's priorities. They also demanded decisive and transparent leadership that can make timely decisions and address community concerns effectively. Participants emphasized the importance of improved communication and engagement between the municipality and residents. They recognized the value of open dialogue and collaboration in ensuring that the community's needs and aspirations are fully represented in the decision-making process.

4.2.4 GOVERNANCE GROUP

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Figure 9 shows a snapshot of all questionnaire responses by the Governance Group (n=4). The Governance Group showed significant support for all dimensions except governance and power relations. However, within governance half of respondents supported the OCP's measures, while the other half opposed it. Except for one respondent that felt the OCP significantly demotes power relations, all other respondents believed the OCP to be moderately or significantly promoting power relations. Generally, all dimensions were rated positively by the Governance Group, however, there was disagreement in governance and power relations.

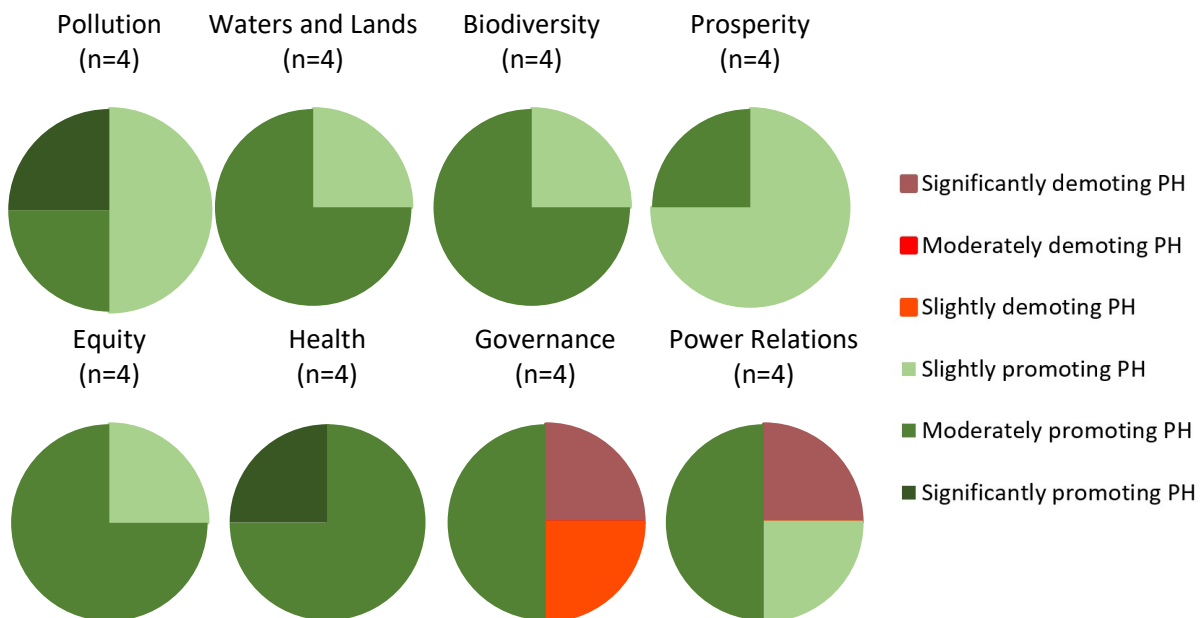


Figure 9 - Snapshot of Questionnaire Responses from The Governance Group

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE GOVERNANCE GROUP

Within the Governance Group, pollution, primarily caused by excessive traffic, was a major source of worry, and participants advocated for the implementation of more walkable and bikeable infrastructure to reduce reliance on cars and improve air quality. They advocated for the maintenance of Sooke's natural character and avoidance of excessive urbanization, emphasizing the importance of preserving agricultural and natural areas, protecting natural resources, and implementing robust biodiversity bylaws.

Participants criticized the political process, calling for greater transparency, effective decision-making, and better implementation of plans. The influence of builders and developer lobbyists was also a significant concern, with participants highlighting the need for more equitable decision-making processes and greater community involvement.

While the OCP process provided opportunities for public participation, participants expressed concerns about communication challenges and the need for more effective engagement strategies. Overall, they emphasized the importance of addressing these pressing issues to create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for Sooke.

4.2.5 DISTRICT OF SOOKE GROUP

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Figure 10 shows a snapshot of all questionnaire responses by the District of Sooke Group (n=3). The group showed strong support for the OCP measures supporting prosperity, waters and lands, pollution, equity, health and power relations. There was significant concerns for biodiversity with two-thirds of respondents indicating an issue with the OCP's measures on biodiversity. Governance received one negative rating, while others believed the OCP promotes governance. Generally, the District of Sooke Group showed strong support for all dimensions except biodiversity and governance.

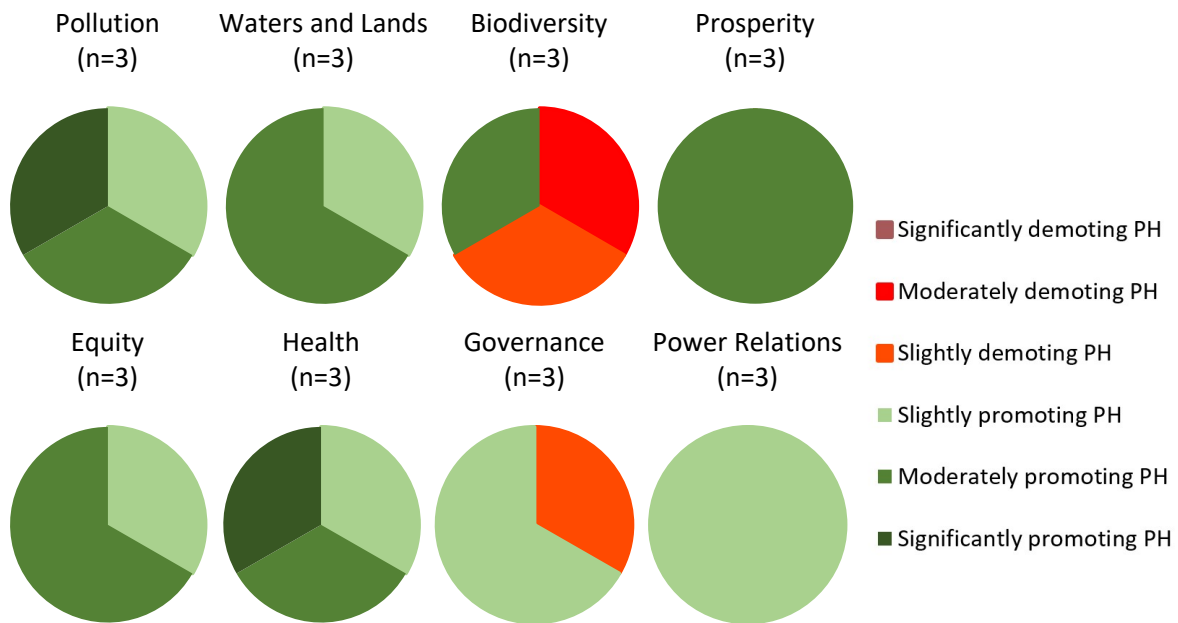


Figure 10 - Snapshot of Questionnaire Responses from The District of Sooke Group

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS IN THE DISTRICT OF SOOKE GROUP

The District of Sooke Group argued that the implementation of the OCP requires consistent policies, community involvement, and ongoing monitoring to effectively reduce pollution, protect biodiversity, and promote prosperity, equity, health, and governance. They added that while the OCP has a strong environmental focus, it needs to be more inclusive, accessible, and equitable to ensure that all community members benefit from its initiatives. They cautioned that the OCP faces challenges in implementation and requires better community engagement, clarity, political will, resources, and adaptability.

By addressing these challenges and prioritizing solutions, the group emphasized that Sooke can be more sustainable and equitable. They believed in the OCP and its potential to be a powerful and effective tool in the community.

4.3 Results by Dimensions of the Planetary Health Framework

This section details the results obtained from the questionnaires and focus group transcriptions. Each subsection addresses one of eight PHF dimension through looking at strengths and risks for alignment with planetary health.

4.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS BY DIMENSION OF THE PLANETARY HEALTH FRAMEWORK

Figure 11 shows a snapshot of questionnaire responses by all focus groups (n=17). Some participants did not provide answers in the questionnaire, citing a lack of knowledge to make

informed decisions. Nearly half of respondents for power relations and more than half of respondents for governance felt the OCP demotes planetary health. There was overwhelming support for pollution, waters and lands, biodiversity, prosperity, equity and health. Approximately a third of respondents rated equity and health negatively. Generally, all respondents showed support for the OCP’s policies and actions, except for those that implicate governance and power relations.

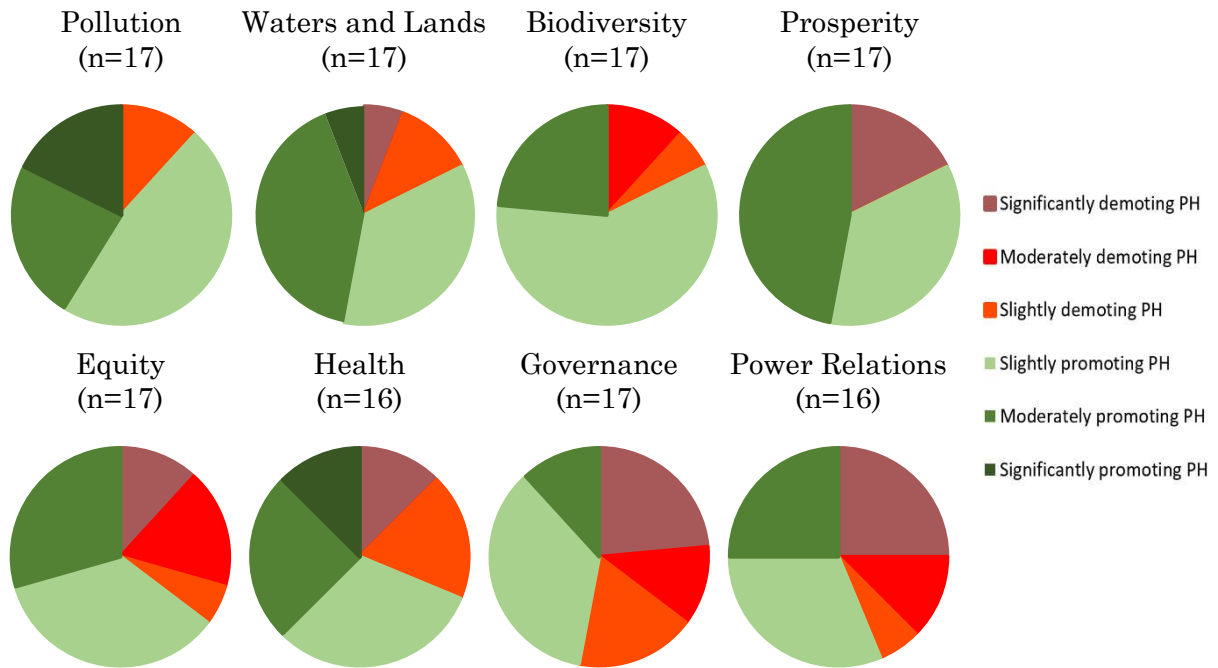


Figure 11 - Snapshot of All Questionnaire Responses Across Focus Groups Regarding Participant Perceptions on the Official Community Plan’s Alignment with Planetary Health Lenses

4.3.2 POLLUTION

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON POLLUTION

Figure 12 shows that a significant majority of respondents believe that the OCP will either slightly (47%) moderately (23%) or significantly (18%) reduce pollution. This suggests a positive outlook on the OCP's effectiveness in addressing pollution concerns. The data indicates strong public support for the OCP's goals and objectives related to pollution reduction.

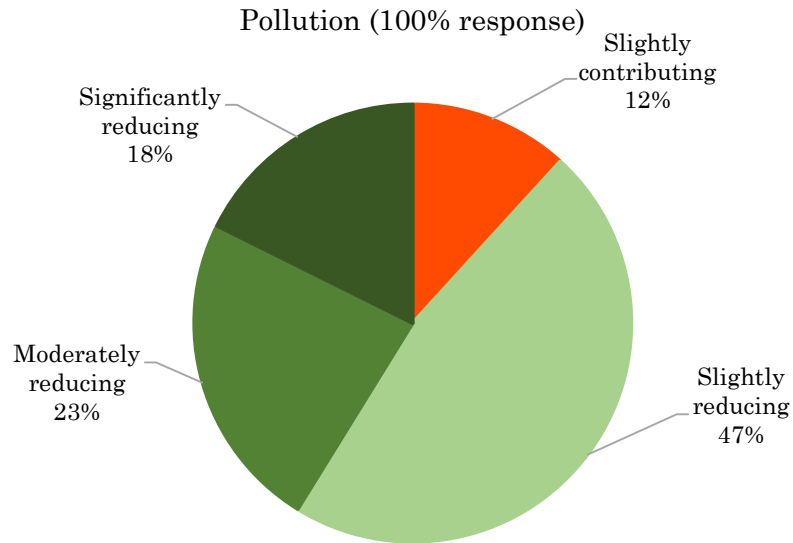


Figure 12 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Pollution

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN REDUCING POLLUTION

Participants were optimistic that the full implementation of the OCP would significantly reduce pollution in Sooke. They also advocated for the simultaneous implementation of the Transportation Master Plan, a separate policy document with a specific operational focus, to enhance the effectiveness of pollution reduction efforts.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING POLLUTION

The development of the Sunriver Estate subdivision¹ was seen by participants as an example of urban sprawl, which leads to increased reliance on cars and increased traffic pollution. Urban sprawl, combined with the already congested Highway 14 – the main artery of Sooke and communities beyond (e.g., Jordan River and Port Renfrew) – leads to longer commute times and increased pollution. While the District's OCP focuses on anti-pollution initiatives, some participants argued that the associated costs of greener solutions are significant. However, many emphasized the need for the District to adopt a more sustainable approach to development and prioritize climate action initiatives, despite increased costs.

To reduce pollution and support sustainable growth in Sooke, participants recommended investing in infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, trails, and sewer. They called on the municipality to explore alternative transportation options like expanded bus service or bike lanes to reduce reliance on cars and mitigate traffic congestion. They argued that prioritizing anti-

¹ [Sunriver Estates](#) is on 382 acres of land in Sooke, BC, off of Highway 14 with 715 planned homes.

pollution measures, despite the associated costs, is crucial for addressing climate change. Participants sought for the adoption of the BC Energy Step Code, net-zero emissions standards and circular economies, such as for remediating contaminated soils locally.

4.3.3 WATERS AND LANDS

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON WATERS AND LANDS

Figure 13 shows that the majority of respondents (82%) believed that the OCP's natural environment policies and actions will have a positive impact on protecting and restoring Sooke's waters and lands. Only 18% of respondents believe these policies and actions will have a negative impact. This suggests a positive outlook on the OCP's effectiveness in addressing waters and lands concerns. The data indicates strong public support for the OCP's goals and objectives related to waters and lands.

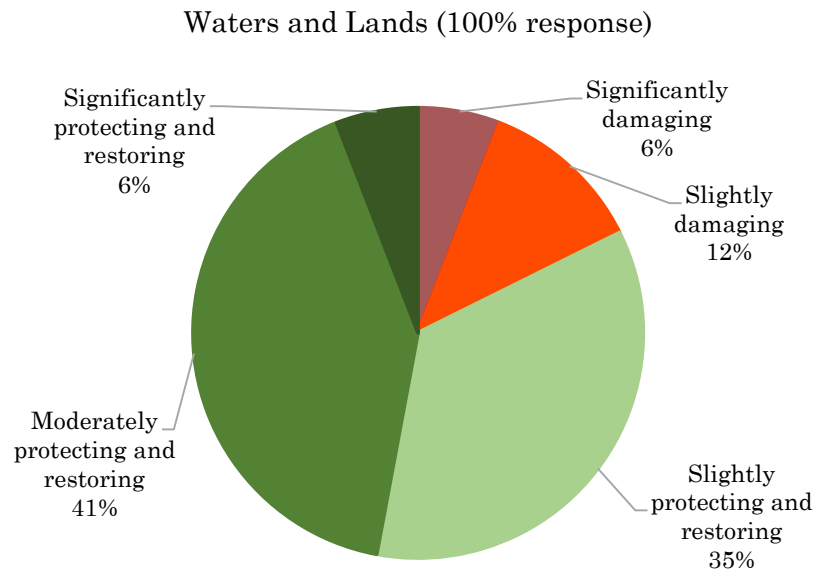


Figure 13 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Waters and Lands

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING WATERS AND LANDS

Participants praised the Trails and Parks Master Plan, a component of the OCP, for its effectiveness in managing Sooke's natural environment. They observed that Sooke residents have a deep appreciation for their natural surroundings, which is evident in the OCP's extensive focus on natural environment policies and actions. While these policies are generally considered progressive and sound, they called for more aggressive measures, such as increased protections for green shores, foreshores, and trees.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING WATERS AND LANDS

Participants emphasized the importance of regional collaboration between Sooke, neighboring municipalities, and the Capital Regional District to ensure effective environmental management. They stressed that while the OCP is a valuable tool, its implementation and community support are crucial for achieving positive outcomes in waters and lands.

Participants called for the alignment of Council decisions with scientific advice and the environmental goals outlined in the OCP, Town Centre Plan, and Trails and Parks Master Plan, especially for decisions affecting waters and lands. They expressed concern about recent developments near Ella Stream that allegedly violated provincial regulations, such as the *Water Sustainability Act*. They highlighted the long-term environmental impacts and potential restoration costs associated with such projects.

Participants identified a lack of environmental monitoring and inadequate protection for wetlands and watersheds in Sooke. They expressed concerns about the growing population and its potential negative effects, including urban sprawl, increased water use, and impacts on agricultural land and green areas. To mitigate these concerns, they supported densification of residences in the town core and advocated for a tree protection bylaw. They also criticized the current soil remediation requirements, which they believe place an unnecessary financial burden on Sooke residents.

4.3.4 BIODIVERSITY

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON BIODIVERSITY

Figure 14 shows that the majority of respondents (72%) believe that the OCP's natural environment policies and actions will have a positive impact on biodiversity. Only 18% of respondents believe these policies and actions will have a negative impact. This suggests a positive outlook on the OCP's effectiveness in addressing biodiversity concerns. The data indicates strong public support for the OCP's goals and objectives related to biodiversity.

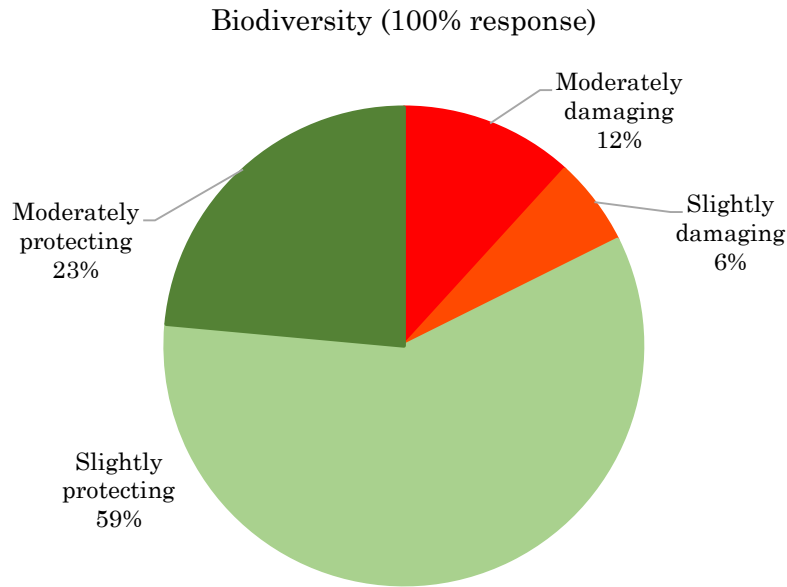


Figure 14 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Biodiversity

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY

Participants acknowledged the positive impact of local biodiversity stewardship initiatives, like the salmon rehabilitation work of the Charters River Salmon Interpretive Centre. However, they advocated for stronger incentives within the OCP to encourage and accelerate conservation-related efforts. Participants expressed support for the OCP and Trails and Parks Master Plan's various policies and actions aimed at protecting salmon, pollinator habitats, setbacks, trees, and wetlands.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING BIODIVERSITY

While many participants did not directly address biodiversity, they recognized the interconnectedness of waters, lands, pollution and biodiversity. They emphasized the need for the OCP to include clear metrics for tracking local biodiversity, use simpler language in related policies and actions, and provide stronger protections for foreshores, slopes, water, land, and trees.

Participants expressed concerns about the negative impacts of growth and development on biodiversity and underscored the urgency of increased environmental and climate action in Sooke. They emphasized the importance of mitigating biodiversity impacts and protecting ecologically sensitive foreshore habitats, even in the face of lobbying pressure. They argued that environmental decisions should be informed by science and align with the OCP's policies and actions, prioritizing objectivity and transparency. Implementing and enforcing the OCP, including monitoring key indicators of success and adapting strategies as needed, is essential for safeguarding biodiversity in Sooke.

4.3.5 PROSPERITY

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON PROSPERITY

Figure 15 shows that the majority of respondents (82%) believe that the OCP's policies and actions will have a positive impact on Sooke's prosperity. 18% of respondents believe these policies and actions will have a negative impact. This suggests a positive outlook on the OCP's effectiveness in promoting prosperity. The data indicates strong public support for the OCP's goals and objectives related to prosperity.

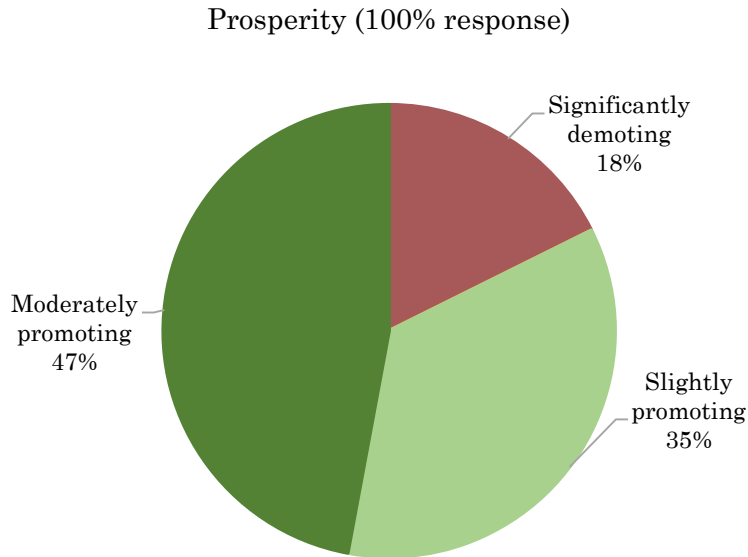


Figure 15 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Prosperity

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING PROSPERITY

One participant believed that the OCP aims to ensure livable incomes, access to food, and affordable housing. Others expressed support for the OCP's measures to create more parks, recreational facilities, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, which can foster social interaction within the community.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING PROSPERITY

Participants discussed various factors influencing prosperity in Sooke. They emphasized the need for the District to balance economic development with community wellbeing, while also addressing issues like traffic congestion and the rising cost of living.

Economic diversification and circular economy initiatives were seen as crucial for Sooke's prosperity. Participants hoped for Sooke to be a single-point solution for its residents, where the community can rely entirely on Sooke for their daily needs, such as through more commercial opportunities, increased accessibility to goods and services and increased career options. They

also highlighted the importance of soil remediation services and supporting local businesses through initiatives like vending spaces and infrastructure.

Social integration was another key topic. Participants expressed concerns about the lack of evening activities and community spaces. They suggested creating a performing arts space, improving public access to oceanfront areas, removing barriers between businesses, and providing more public parking and mixed-use spaces.

Business-related challenges were also discussed. Participants highlighted hurdles in obtaining business licenses, permits, and zoning approvals. Discrimination by property owners and a lack of commercial space for larger businesses were identified as factors contributing to the loss of newer and older businesses in Sooke.

4.3.6 EQUITY

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON EQUITY

Figure 16 shows that while a majority (64%) of respondents believe the OCP's policies and actions will promote equity, a significant minority (36%) believe they will have a negative impact. Notably, 18% believe the OCP will moderately demote equity, and 12% believe it will significantly demote equity. This suggests a need for further analysis and consideration of potential areas for improvement. The data indicates a range of opinions on the OCP's impact on equity, highlighting the complexity of the issue. Some respondents may have concerns about specific policies or initiatives within the OCP that they believe could negatively impact equity.

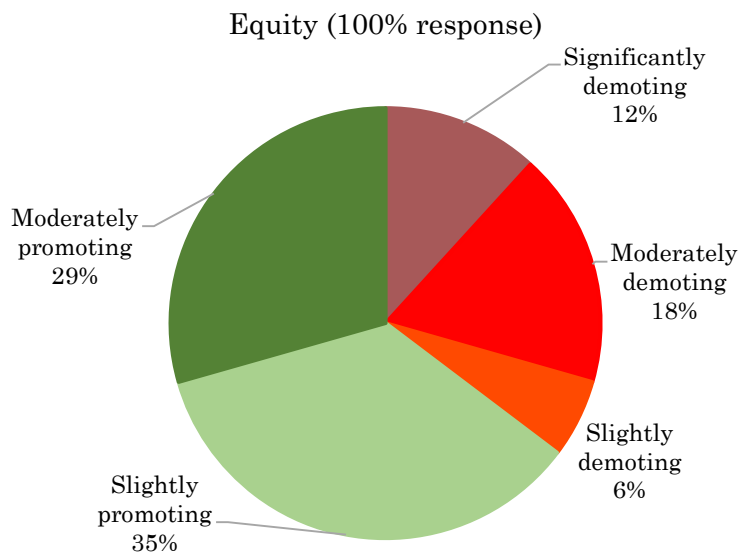


Figure 16 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Equity

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING EQUITY

Participants believed that the OCP is well-intentioned in its efforts to promote equity in Sooke. They viewed the Memorandum of Understanding between the District and the T'sou-ke Nation as a positive step towards Indigenous reconciliation.

The establishment of the Sooke Branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library was widely praised as an inclusive and accessible space that welcomes people of all abilities. They argued that this library serves as a great example of how to create a welcoming and inclusive community environment.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING EQUITY

Participants raised concerns about the OCP's lack of clarity regarding operational elements and its potential for unintended bias. They emphasized the importance of engaging with a diverse range of Sooke residents to identify specific equity groups and their specific needs. Participants recommended for the OCP to include equity-specific policies and actions to address the unique needs of different groups, such as youth, individuals with disabilities and unhoused people.

Participants criticized the OCP's development process for excluding certain demographics, such as youth and unhoused people. They argued that this could lead to policies that primarily benefit older white residents. They called for increased financial support for youth to offset the disproportionate impacts they face from recent hikes in food and housing costs. Additionally, they called for broader engagement in the OCP development process to ensure all community needs are represented.

Participants advocated for more diverse and inclusive events and learning opportunities to promote inclusion and understanding. They highlighted the need for Council to address racism and ensure diversity among its members. Concerns were also raised about the lack of inclusivity for T'sou-ke Nation individuals in community events and the need for increased transparency in reconciliation-related initiatives.

4.3.7 HEALTH

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON HEALTH

Figure 17 suggests that while the majority (69%) of respondents believe the OCP will positively impact health, there is a notable minority (31%) who believe it will have a negative effect. This suggests a need for further analysis and consideration of potential areas for improvement. The data indicates a range of opinions on the OCP's impact on health, highlighting the complexity of the issue. Some respondents may have concerns about specific policies or initiatives within the OCP that they believe could negatively impact health.

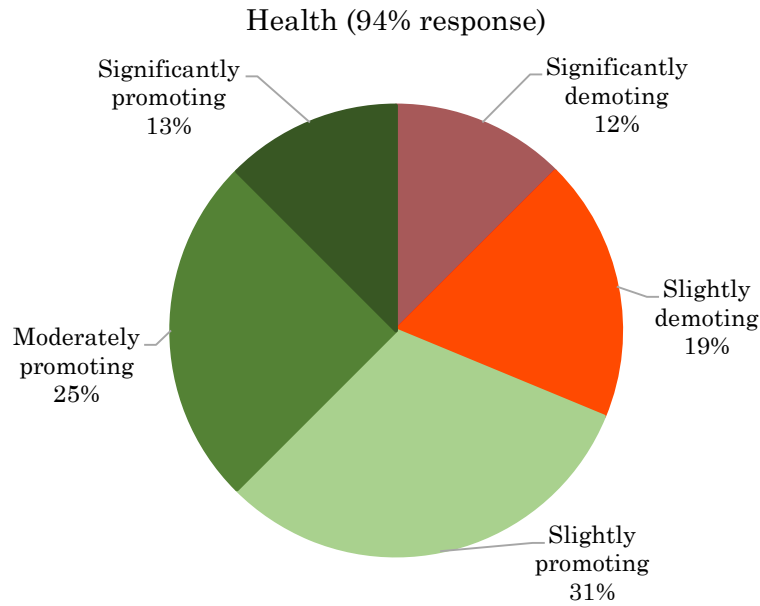


Figure 17 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Health

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING HEALTH

Participants expressed support for the OCP and Trails and Parks Master Plan's efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle for all ages and abilities. They recognized the importance of parks, recreational facilities, walkable infrastructure, and measures to address flooding and runoff in creating a more safe, accessible and enjoyable community for residents of all backgrounds.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING HEALTH

Participants stated that many Sooke residents lack access to a family doctor and that mental health resources are limited. They called for additional resources in these areas. Additionally, they highlighted that Sooke is unprepared for environmental emergencies such as earthquakes, heat domes, and atmospheric rivers. Sheltering areas, emergency supplies, and awareness of emergency protocols need to be improved, particularly in local elementary schools. Further, they noted that the lack of social gathering spaces for youth is a concern and argued that these spaces are essential for nourishing social and mental wellbeing.

4.3.8 GOVERNANCE

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON GOVERNANCE

Figure 18 shows a mixed perception of the OCP's governance, with a relatively even distribution of responses across the different categories. The largest segment (35%) believes that the OCP's governance is slightly coordinated, indicating a moderate level of coordination. The majority (53%) believe that the OCP's governance is slightly, moderately or significantly uncoordinated. This suggests that there are areas for improvement in terms of coordination and collaboration among the various stakeholders involved in the OCP's implementation. The data may indicate

challenges in coordinating efforts among the different organizations and individuals involved in the OCP's implementation.

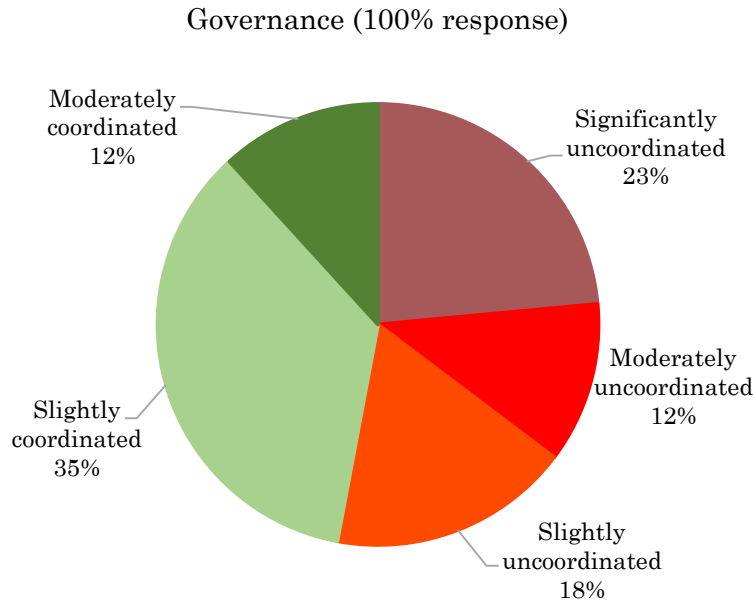


Figure 18 - Public Perception of the OCP's Governance

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING GOVERNANCE

Participants generally viewed the draft OCP as a significant improvement over its predecessor, the 2010 OCP. They praised the draft OCP's preamble for accurately reflecting the values and aspirations of Sooke residents. Many believed that the draft OCP, if fully implemented, could positively influence Council decisions, policies, actions, zoning, and bylaws.

The District's efforts to maintain a diverse and inclusive staff were seen as a positive step towards better representing the Sooke community. A participant emphasized the importance of intergovernmental collaboration with the Capital Regional District and the Province of British Columbia in ensuring the successful implementation of the OCP.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING GOVERNANCE

Participants expressed concerns about the OCP's implementation, citing decision bias, lack of transparency and insufficient staff resources. They advocated for greater transparency, accountability, and alignment between Council decisions, staff expertise, and community needs.

Participants highlighted the need for Council members with relevant experience and education, as well as a more rigorous vetting process. They emphasized the importance of fair compensation for Council members to attract these qualified individuals.

The District's efficiency and productivity were also criticized. Staffing turnovers, onboarding delays, and the four-year electoral cycle were seen as contributing factors. Participants called for streamlined processes, improved communication, and greater alignment between government funding timelines.

Participants believed that the OCP would not be fully implemented without stronger political will and effective communication between Council and staff. They emphasized the importance of clear, understandable language in the OCP and the need for a phased approach to implementation.

Accountability and transparency were key concerns. Participants advocated for an accountability framework with measurable indicators to track progress that is specific, measurable, achievable and timebound (SMART). They also emphasized the need for greater public engagement and feedback to ensure the OCP aligns with community needs.

Other issues raised included the potential impacts of growth and development on Sooke, the need for clarity on the District's role within the broader regional context, and the importance of addressing issues beyond Sooke's control, such as provincial housing targets and global climate change.

4.3.9 POWER RELATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ANALYSIS ON POWER RELATIONS

Figure 19 shows a mixed perception of the OCP's impact on power relations, with a relatively even distribution of responses across the different categories. A majority of respondents (56%) believe the OCP is either slightly or moderately empowering. A significant portion (44%) believe the OCP is slightly, moderately or significantly disempowering. This suggests that the OCP's impact on power relations is complex and multifaceted. The data may indicate that different groups or individuals have varying experiences with the OCP's impact on power relations.

Power relations (94% response)

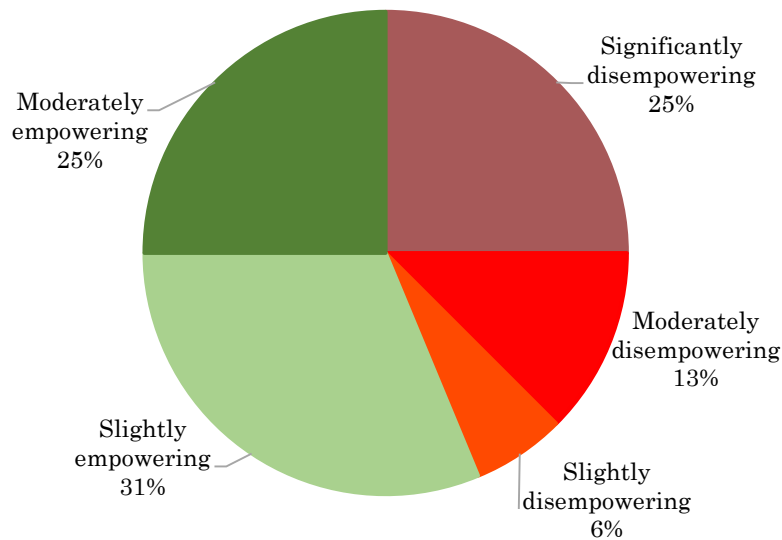


Figure 19 - Public Perception of the OCP's Impact on Power Relations

STRENGTHS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN PROMOTING POWER RELATIONS

Participants identified several factors that contribute to empowering Sooke residents in municipal decision-making. The existing Memorandum of Understanding with the T'sou-ke Nation was recognized as a crucial step towards reconciliation. The District's engagement efforts, including regular meetings with residents, such as during farmers markets, and open house sessions, were widely supported. Initiatives such as the installation of a bear-resistant garbage bin at Ella Beach, in response to 35 letters from school-aged children, demonstrated the District's commitment to community involvement. Additionally, participants supported participatory budgets on advisory committees, Indigenous placenames on signs, and other initiatives that contribute to reconciliation.

RISKS OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN IN DEMOTING POWER RELATIONS

Participants were concerned that current engagements with T'sou-ke Nation can be more meaningful, with further efforts required from both sides on promoting an effective and respectful relationship.

Participants expressed deep concern about the undue influence of lobby groups on Council decision-making. They alleged that the Council is biased towards certain groups, including incumbents, builders, developers, long-time residents, large property owners and waterfront property owners. They accused lobby groups of using coercion, manipulation, racism, and cronyism to sway Council decisions. Additionally, they noted concerns within and around Council on bullying, aggression, and racism during decision-making processes. They claimed these biased decisions benefit Council members personally, providing them with recognition,

social status and future political connections. They claimed the biased decisions are contrary to advice from District staff, leading to reduced staff morale and significant staff turnovers. They argued these biases are detrimental to the community's goals, objectives, and finances. Participants also raised concerns about misinformation spread by private lobby groups that could hinder the implementation of the OCP. Participants called on Council decisions to represent the interests of all stakeholders, including those who voted for and against them, those who are ineligible to vote, the environment, future generations, and visitors.

Participants noted the growing concern among builders and developers in Sooke regarding the implementation of net zero building practices required under the OCP and pedestrian infrastructure requirements, such as sidewalks, bike lanes and boulevards. They argued that while these initiatives aim to create a sustainable community, the costs associated with implementing these changes are being absorbed by the developers. Similarly, participants expressed concerns on having to pay increased taxes to fund essential District expenditures, particularly those related to climate action. Participants stated that developers express differing intentions regarding compliance with building standards, with some prioritizing sustainability for future market advantages while others opting for less green building methods. Participants raised concerns about the lack of equal opportunity for public input on the OCP, as there are special meetings for the developer and builder community only.

Participants expressed concerns about the lack of operational mechanisms to empower marginalized populations and ensure their voices represented in Council decisions. Additionally, they shared their concern on low public participation in local politics. While participants acknowledged that Council meetings often occur during times that are inconvenient for families, they emphasized the need for more accessible opportunities for community involvement in decision-making processes.

Many participants shared their concerns for significant barriers hindering the establishment of new businesses in Sooke, while doubting that Council is sufficiently aware of this issue. They recommended that Council collaborate with the private sector through public-private partnerships for infrastructure and building projects to address these challenges and foster economic growth.

Participants expressed concerns that current District engagement efforts are inadequate in reaching Sooke residents. Recommendations included traditional canvassing methods (e.g., clipboard and pen at people's homes and neighbourhoods) and adopting centralized information boards (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) to improve accessibility. Concerns about the capacity for communication positions within the District were also raised. Additionally, participants noted a need for increased engagement with the builder/developer community considering new building requirements in the draft OCP.

Many participants felt that the community's input to the OCP was not adequately valued by Council, leading to a sense of disempowerment. Additionally, they noted concerns that Council is unwilling to reopen the engagement process for the OCP, despite the possibility of doing so. Participants recommended future engagements for the development of the OCP to include a large roundtable representing all of Sooke's diversity.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the results of the study through looking at the distribution of opinions across focus groups and central themes from all focus groups. Strengths and challenges are provided in the context of evaluating an existing policy through the PHF.

5.1 Distribution of Opinions Across Focus Groups

By understanding whether focus groups coalesced around certain issues, policy-makers can understand sector specific needs and broader community needs. District priorities should address all needs, especially issues that were represented across the five focus groups.

All groups agree on the fundamental goal of improving Sooke, but their priorities diverged. The Nature and Wellness Group emphasized environmental protection, while the Business Group focused on economic growth. The Governance Group and District of Sooke Group struck a balance between these two, highlighting the need for sustainable development.

The draft OCP is criticized for its complexity and lack of clarity. All groups agree that it needs to be more accessible and reflective of the community's priorities. This suggests a need for a more inclusive and participatory process in future revisions.

The importance of community involvement was a recurring theme across all groups. This underscored the need for open dialogue, transparent decision-making, and accessible information to ensure that all residents feel empowered to participate in shaping Sooke's future.

While there are differences in perspective among the various groups, there is a shared commitment to improving Sooke. Sector specific needs included further supports for marginalized communities, businesses and nature conservation. Overarching needs included a simplification of the OCP, transparent and accountable decision-making and better avenues for civic engagement. By working together, the community can address the challenges and opportunities presented by the OCP and create a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future.

5.2 Central Themes From All Focus Groups

Most opinions from the five focus groups focused on the governance and power relations dimensions of the PHF. Many saw that the OCP, as drafted, will support most of the planetary health dimensions well. While the engagement process with Sooke residents that informed the draft OCP was touted as nebulous and the resulting document confusing and hard to access, many participants honestly believed that the draft OCP truly represents the needs of Sooke and saw themselves reflected in the OCP. However, there was significant doubts across focus groups that the OCP will be thoroughly implemented, mostly due to a lack of political will, with participants giving up on the perceived positive effects of the OCP's policies and actions. Many showed significant concerns for the lack of enforcement measures (e.g., legislative 'teeth') to

non-compliance of the OCP through Council decisions, resulting in a general sense of apathy and helplessness around implementation plausibility.

If the OCP is adopted, most participants wanted to see a transparent and objective decision-making framework, rationalizing each Council decision in terms of alignment with the OCP to ensure that Council is accountable to implementing their commitments. Mechanisms to support objective decision-making, such as this one, will diminish the influence of lobby groups that seek to promote their personal and economic interests over community interests.

However, the pliability of Council to lobbying pressure poses an important opportunity for the community. Many participants have shared that there is often a low turnout of Sooke residents at most Council meetings, however, the District stated they thoroughly consider public input in their decisions, should the public voice their opinions. Hence, there is a need for Sooke residents across all sectors, ages, genders, sexes, cultures and identities to engage with the District and Council and share their hopes for a better Sooke. If residents give up on their aspirations for Sooke, there is little chance for the District to understand the community's needs and bring about a Sooke that benefits all residents. Without civic engagement and advocacy, Sooke residents can expect no meaningful change within their community.

Participants also wanted the District to report on their implementation progress of the OCP annually, with the requirement for the District to develop a reporting framework with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound (SMART) indicators of implementation. If there is a transparent measure of success throughout the life of the OCP, there will be increased buy-in from the community on the OCP and the work of the District.

Another central theme involved Sooke's commuter town shortcomings, including the reliance on cars for jobs and access to goods and services. Sooke does not have a strong job market where most of the working population commutes to nearby towns for work. Sooke also lacks many goods and services such that residents are often driving elsewhere in search for them, which will further entrench its status as a bedroom town, exacerbating the already-snarled traffic issue and greenhouse gas emissions from commuter traffic. Further, if residents are forced to commute, there is less capacity for civic engagement. However, if residents can live, work and play in Sooke alone, the community can reduce traffic pollution, enhance its social capital and cohesion and have increased capacity to engage with the municipality, overall fostering a greater sense of pride in Sooke.

5.3 Strengths and Challenges of Applying the Planetary Health Framework to an Existing Policy

This project was the first application of planetary health approaches and tools for a comprehensive evaluation of an existing policy (i.e., the District of Sooke's draft OCP). Given the myriad issues Earth is facing today from climate change, global biodiversity loss, among

others, a wholistic approach is necessary when seeking to improve interventions and ensure alignment with planetary health values.

As the PHF was the basis of this study, the framework allowed the focus groups to be structured in a way that solicits participant opinions in direct relation to the eight dimensions of the PHF (Table 2). The composition of focus group participants was selected to ensure they represent the lenses of the PHF where possible. Similar future evaluations situated in the PHF must ensure that participants can speak to each of the dimensions in the PHF and that all opinions from across focus groups are equally valued and treated without researcher bias.

Challenges in applying the PHF to an existing policy included the difficulties in soliciting participant opinions in direct relation to the PHF dimensions. This requires a thorough and digestible presentation of the PHF and its eight dimensions to participants while being cognizant that participants have a varied levels of education, qualification and experience.

Another challenge involved categorizing opinions to the appropriate dimension. For example, impacts to nature are often lumped into one category (e.g., waters and lands), rather than specific issues raised on biodiversity or management of waters and lands. Unless participants specifically spoke directly to one of the dimensions, opinions may aggregate in some dimensions more than others, leading to data skew. Further, there are instances where issues on power relations may be encountered within the government (i.e., District of Sooke), however, for the purposes of this study any issues internal to government were categorized as governance and external to government as power relations. It is important for future evaluations based on the PHF to ensure that all participant opinions are consistently categorized to prevent bias and the silencing of opinions.

Another challenge involved some participants citing lack of knowledge or experience in certain dimensions of the PHF (e.g., health) and refusing to contribute in parts of the focus group. However, as people are diverse with varied qualifications, experiences and identities, a lack of specific understanding under each PHF dimension is inevitable for future PHF-based evaluations (i.e., some people are generalists, others are specialists, and some are in between). Often, participants will compensate for each other's knowledge gaps, hence a well-rounded group of participants is beneficial in this type of study.

While the PHF represents an effective way to ensure a wholistic evaluation of an existing policy, careful attention must be paid in educating participants on the PHF and its dimensions, consistently categorizing opinions in the appropriate PHF dimension, as well as soliciting a diverse group of participants that can speak to each of the PHF's dimensions through their diverse lived experiences.

6. Recommendations from Focus Group Participants on Improving Sooke's Contribution to Planetary Health

Recommendations from focus group participants for the Sooke OCP to better align with planetary health are provided in this section by dimension of the PHF. The recommendations were synthesized in a way that was true to the spirit of the participants who voiced them and represented the desires of participants in shaping Sooke's future. As the recommendations were not critically analyzed nor refined by the researcher, further work is required to ensure that the recommendations are appropriate for the District of Sooke's jurisdiction, among other key considerations. However, this simple collection of hopes by Sooke residents may support the District of Sooke in implementing meaningful changes in the upcoming OCP.

Nature

For the purposes of this subsection, the three nature dimensions of the PHF were amalgamated, which include pollution, waters and lands, as well as biodiversity.

1. Implement the OCP as written to significantly reduce local pollution, leading to improved air and water quality.
2. Densify residential units to support and conserve Sooke's nature.
3. Invest in more green infrastructure, such as creating and expanding parks and trails, and planting more trees.
4. Endorse sustainable development practices that minimize environmental impact and promote the long-term wellbeing of the community.
5. Adopt the BC Energy Step Code and net-zero emission standards to enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and mitigate climate change. Realize greener standards provide greater environmental returns in the future relative to the status quo.
6. Deny future development projects that promote urban sprawl (e.g., Sunriver Estates).
7. Establish Sooke as a single-point solution through greater access to goods and services and career options. Less commuting means less traffic-related pollution.
8. Expand sewer service across Sooke, which reduces local pollution into waters and lands.
9. Protect ecologically sensitive, biodiversity hotspots in Sooke, such as foreshores, through, for example, increased setback distances in development permits.
10. Implement nature-based solutions for flood mitigation, such as restoring and creating wetlands. Minimize paved surfaces in Sooke, which promote flooding.
11. Look for and undertake wholistic anti-pollution interventions, such as adopting lifecycle and circular economy lenses in intervention development.

Prosperity

1. Diversify local businesses and employment opportunities to transform Sooke into a live-work-play community / single-point solution that is self-sufficient.
2. Investigate and implement avenues to increase road safety on Highway 14 to reduce traffic load and improve community wellbeing.
3. Remove fencing and other barriers between businesses in the Sooke town core and install additional sidewalks and trails around Sooke to promote walkability in the community.
4. Provide improved transportation options, such as bike lanes, sidewalks and local shuttles.
5. Provide increased access to goods and services to make Sooke a more attractive place to live and work, including:
 - a. Increased medical service centers for physical and mental health,
 - b. Automotive parts retailer,
 - c. Cafes, neighbourhood pubs, restaurants and bars,
 - d. Movie theater and a rentable and accessible stage rental for arts events,
 - e. More public parking in the town core, like Duncan BC's town core,
 - f. Satellite business hubs, such as in areas outside of Sooke town core with cafes and gathering places,
 - g. Artisan and farmer vending stalls, such as the vendor containers set up in Langford, BC, with amenities, such as bathrooms and electricity.
 - h. Multi-purpose community spaces that are open to all residents, open late into the evening, and reservable for events and functions.
 - i. Public access areas in and around Sooke's waterfront.
6. Implement circular economies into business planning to conserve natural and human resources and create local jobs. For example, provide local alternatives for soil remediation around development activities.
7. Endorse and support local businesses, farmers and organizations to support Sooke's local economy, such as through providing greater support for businesses undergoing a permit process. Particularly, participants highlighted the difficulties associated with obtaining engineering reports.
8. Establish more commercial areas in Sooke to retain business upstarts that have become successful, such as Sheringham Distillery, which moved to Langford BC due to lack of commercial space in Sooke.

9. Require landowners of businesses to equally and fairly consider new businesses as tenants.
10. Plan infrastructures such that all elementary schools, businesses and core components of Sooke's goods and services are not located on the single artery of the town (i.e., Highway 14) to reduce traffic pressure and vehicular pollution.
11. Adopt the BC Energy Step Code and net-zero emission standards to increase future financial benefits to Sooke relative to status quo building methods and standards.
12. Endorse, coordinate and support a vibrant calendar of cultural events, festivals, and activities to enhance the quality of life for residents and attract visitors.
13. Enable mixed-use spaces for businesses and residences to support housing availability and local economy.
14. Enable co-op housing options to support individuals from all circumstances and income levels in finding a home.

Equity

1. Promote diversity and inclusion within Council to ensure that all of Sooke's voices are heard and represented, such as through training and education for increased awareness, understanding and allyship to marginalized communities within government.
2. Require training and education for District staff and Council on diversity and inclusion topics to mitigate adverse equity impacts to marginalized populations.
3. Provide more opportunities for community engagement to empower all the voices of Sooke in decision-making.
4. Prioritize equity initiatives within the OCP to address the needs of marginalized populations and ensure equal opportunities for all Sooke residents.
5. Engage and identify the various marginalized communities within Sooke to better account for their specific needs in decision-making.
6. Develop operational elements of the OCP around policies and actions for equity to ensure results provide the intended benefits to equity groups.
7. Support and coordinate more local events celebrating cultural, religious and spiritual diversity that is catered not only to families but to all individuals of all abilities.
8. Require all public buildings and businesses in Sooke to be accessible to individuals of all abilities.

9. Pursue efforts to strengthen the relationship between the District of Sooke and the T'sou-ke Nation to support reconciliation and equity within Sooke.
10. Empower Sooke residents to support inclusion and accessibility by all community members around decision-making, such as through clear government outreach and communication, more forums for public feedback and identifying and addressing any barriers to participation.

Health

1. Provide further access to medical and mental health services, including for youth, to support the health of Sooke residents.
2. Promote emergency preparedness within the community to ensure Sooke is ready for environmental crises, such as through establishing more sheltering areas, emergency supply areas and emergency preparedness training and education.

Governance

1. Rationalize Council decisions based on the commitments in the OCP to promote decision-objectivity and transparency.
2. Establish an accountability framework that uses specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) principles to ensure transparency and accountability within the work of the District of Sooke.
3. Provide annual reports of the District of Sooke's progress in meeting the commitments of the OCP, supported by an accountability framework.
4. Ensure the OCP is clearly articulated and understandable by the average Sooke resident to ensure goals, objectives and strategies of the plan are understood by residents.
5. Ensure sufficient government resources are allocated to implementing the commitments of the OCP to ensure the policies and actions under the OCP are effectively implemented.
6. Prioritize and implement key policies and actions under the OCP to effectively tackle its commitments.
7. Implement a regular review process for the OCP to ensure that it remains relevant and effective, as well as flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.

Power Relations

1. Provide further channels for public input to effectively engage the community and empower Sooke residents, such as through traditional canvassing methods (e.g., clipboard and pen style at people's homes), Facebook and Instagram.

2. Rationalize Council decisions based on the interests of all stakeholders, including those who voted for and against them, those who are ineligible to vote, the environment, future generations, and visitors.

7. Knowledge Transfer Activities

A list of suggestions to improve the OCP, as identified during focus group discussions, was presented for the District of Sooke to inform future directions of the draft OCP in [section 6](#) of this thesis. The results of the study will be available to research participants and the public once defended.

8. Conclusion

This study contributed to further understanding the Planetary Health Framework in a practical setting and generated novel knowledge in policy evaluation. This project was the first application of planetary health approaches and tools for a comprehensive evaluation of an existing policy. It informed future theory-based evaluations for planetary health. This thesis may contribute to better actions for nature and humans through a wider awareness of the Planetary Health Framework and adoption of the framework by more organizations and governments. This study provided opportunities for the District of Sooke to better align with planetary health while empowering the voices of its diverse residents.

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Annex 1 – Focus Group Agenda Items and Discussion Topics

Duration: 120 minutes

Number of participants: Between 5 and 10

- 1) Opening remarks and introductions (20 minutes):
 - Thanking the participants for joining.
 - Presenting and signing the consent form, if they haven't done so already (i.e., electronically)
 - Go over informal rules (see methods section above).
 - Roundtable introductions
 1. Name
 2. Tell us about something you really enjoy in Sooke.
- 2) Kai's Presentation (15 minutes)
 1. Planetary health framework
 2. Sooke OCP, as informed by official documents,
 3. a revised logic model of the OCP in relation to framework dimensions
- 3) Q&A period for the preceding presentation (15 minutes)
- 4) Hand out questionnaire (i.e., Annex 4), participants may fill in concurrent with the following sections, to be handed in at the end of the focus group. There will be an explanation of the questionnaire (5 minutes)
- 5) Discussion (60 minutes)
 1. Do you think the OCP has the potential to make Sooke a greater contributor to Planetary Health? Explain your point of view.
 2. What do you see as the key strengths of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?
 3. What do you perceive as the pitfalls or challenges of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?
 4. How likely is it that the OCP will achieve its objectives?
- 6) Closing remarks (5 minutes)
 - Thank everyone for coming
 - Provide a channel for any personal follow up discussions the participants may have, such as if there wasn't enough time to fill out the questionnaire in the time allotted.
 - Offer to share the study's results when ready by creating a list of interested individuals.

Annex 2 – Presentation Provided to Focus Groups

A theory-based evaluation of the District of Sooke's Official Community Plan from a Planetary Health perspective

Kai Mountfort – KaiMountfort@UVic.ca

Master of Public Administration candidate

University of Victoria – School of Public Administration



University
of Victoria

Agenda of the day



Opening remarks and introductions (20 minutes):



Presentation (15 minutes)



Question and answer period (15 minutes)



Questionnaire instructions (5 minutes)



Discussion period (60 minutes)



Closing remarks (5 minutes)

In opening...



I truly appreciate everyone's time– thank you very much for joining us today.



Please ensure you have already signed the consent form.



Housekeeping rules



Introductions

Your name
Something you really enjoy about Sooke
Aspirations for Sooke (what change would you like to see?).

A safe space to share opinions

- I will equally value all of your opinions.
- I will moderate the discussion and steer the group along the agenda.
- We are to respectfully share opinions during discussion.
- I will not share what was discussed beyond this focus group, except in the results of the study.
- Opinions of each focus group will be in the results of my thesis.
 - Indigenous Voices, Social, Nature and Wellness, Business, Governance
- You may share your opinions after the focus group with me.
 - Those opinions will be equally considered in the study as those shared during the focus group.
- Are there any other thoughts to promote a safe space?



Presenting my thesis



Why am I doing this thesis?



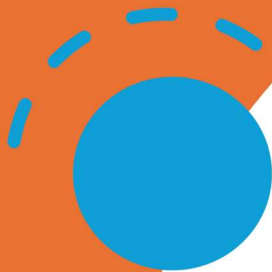
Why the planetary health framework (PHF)?



The District of Sooke's Official Community Plan (OCP)?



How can Sooke better contribute to planetary health?



Why am I doing this thesis?

Planetary Health Framework

“Planetary health is an approach that considers the interdependence between the elements and living beings (plants, animals including humans), emphasizing the importance of cultivating a positive ecosystem to support the flourishing of all forms of life” (Brousselle *et al.*, 2024, *Evaluation*)

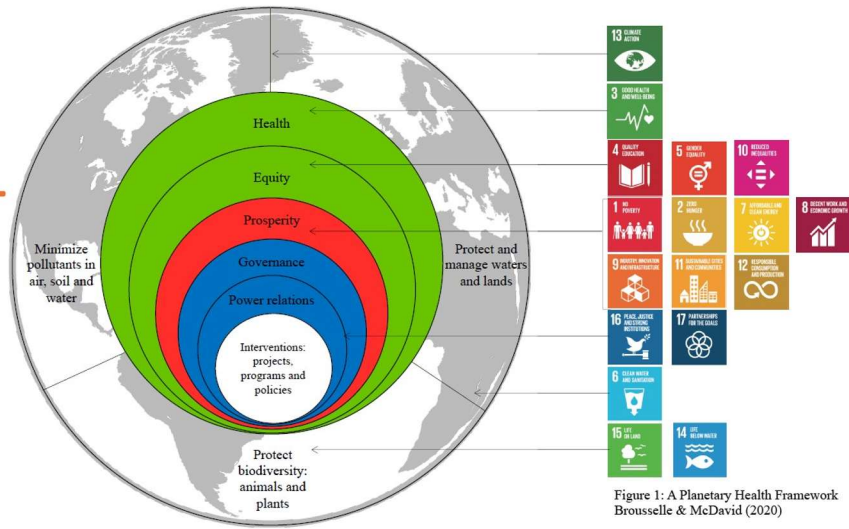
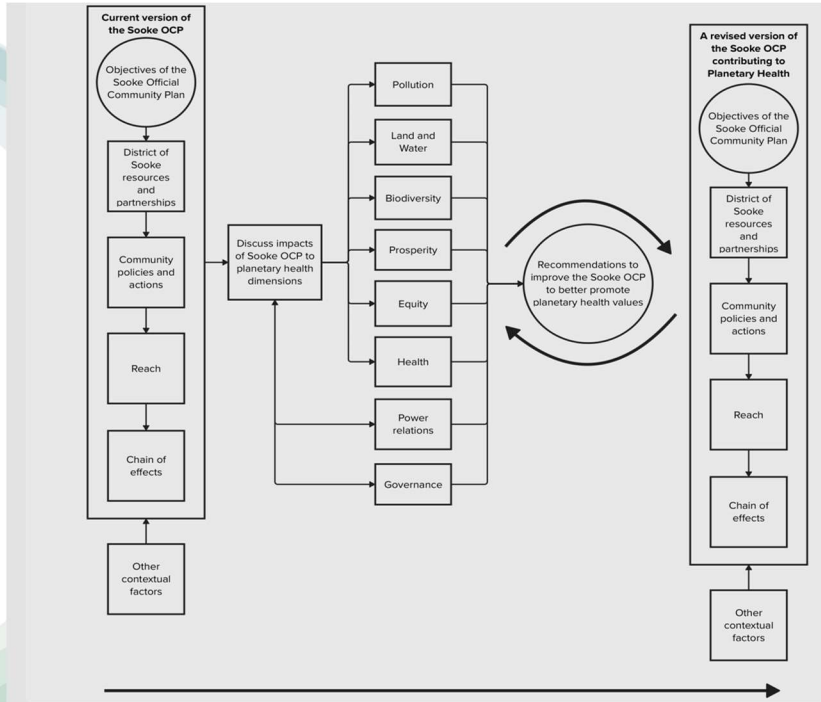


Figure 1: A Planetary Health Framework Brousselle & McDavid (2020)

The logic of the study – applying a planetary health lens on the Sooke OCP



The District of Sooke's Official Community Plan

- All District policy development and implementation must align with the OCP with updates every 5 – 10 years.
 - where to place homes, businesses, industry, agriculture, parks, other public spaces
 - transportation choices, housing affordability and options, community character, ecological and agricultural protection, resource management, economic vitality and taxable costs (e.g., pipes and streets).
- Current version of OCP is not finalized.

Sample of OCP Policies and Actions for discussion

Action 4.2.1.10 Encourage private stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas. Encourage landowners to protect, preserve, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas on private property through conservation tools such as conservation covenants, land trusts, and eco-gifting (Natural Environment, non-tangible, Land & Water)

Action 4.4.3.2 Prioritize building renovation permits targeting higher energy and emissions performance in the building permit application queue (Green Building, non-tangible, Pollution)

See the print out for complete list of samples

Policy 4.7.3.1 Support partnership opportunities with local private and public sector organizations, including T'Sou-ke Nation and other Indigenous peoples, to advance ongoing community improvements, offer local business support, attract external investment, and undertake joint marketing initiatives (Community Economic Development, T'sou-ke Nation, Prosperity).

Policy 4.6.5.2 Eliminate contamination of the Sooke Harbour and Basin to re-establish the local shellfish industry and traditional harvesting practices (Agriculture and Food Systems, Tangible, Pollution).

Action 4.9.5.2 Support the needs of households with children in multi-unit buildings by establishing the following requirements in the Zoning Bylaw:

- Minimum outdoor amenity spaces
- Minimum number of two- and three-bedroom units (Housing, Tangible, Equity)

Structure of the Sooke Official Community Plan (OCP)



- Categories are nested and intertwined
- There are duplications in the Policies and Actions as they relate to one or more Community Policies



The OCP's Goal Areas and Community Policies

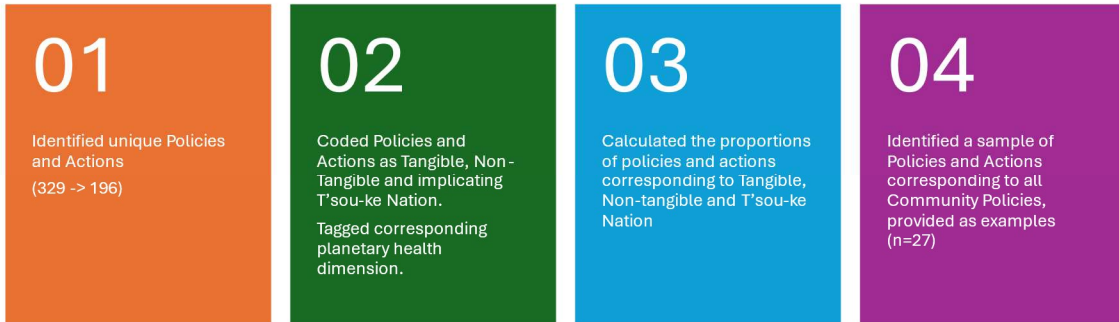
Goal Areas

- Enjoyable & Distinct
- Equitable & Respectful
- Green & Net Zero

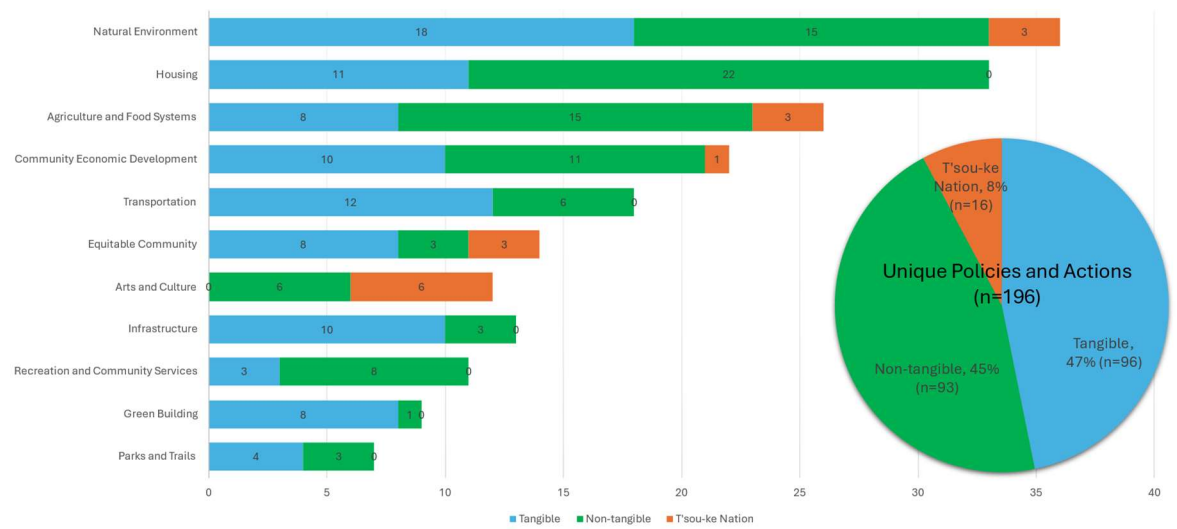
Community Policies

- Agriculture and Food Systems
- Arts and Culture
- Community Economic Development
- Equitable Community
- Green Building
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Parks and Trails
- Recreation and Community Services
- Transportation

How I filtered the many Policies and Actions to a digestible size



Proportions of Tangible, Non-tangible T'sou-ke Nation Policies and Actions (only unique)





Questions and Answers

What are your thoughts around what you've heard and seen so far?

Reminder: I will happily talk with you after the focus group if you want to share your opinions privately.



Anonymous questionnaire

- Please fill in your opinions at any point in the focus group.
- Do not enter any personal information in your questionnaire.
- The questionnaire will be collected at the end of the focus group.

Discussion period



Discussion topics



How likely is it that the OCP will achieve its objectives?



What do you see as the key strengths of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?



What do you perceive as the pitfalls or challenges of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?



Do you think the OCP has the potential to make Sooke a greater contributor to Planetary Health? Explain your point of view.

Discussion (1 of 4)

How likely is it that the OCP will achieve its objectives?



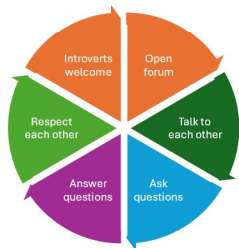
Discussion (2 of 4)

What do you see as the key strengths of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?



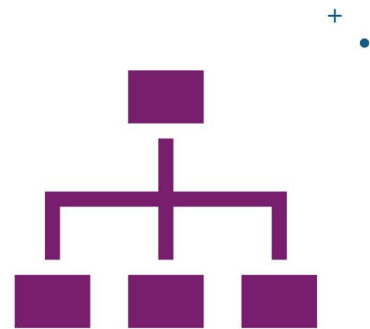
Discussion (3 of 4)

What do you perceive as the pitfalls or challenges of the OCP with regards to Planetary Health?



Discussion (4 of 4)

Do you think the OCP has the potential to make Sooke a greater contributor to Planetary Health? Explain your point of view.



In closing...

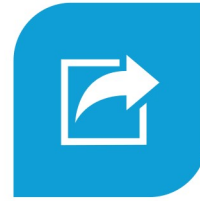


THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT MY THESIS WILL MAKE SOOKE A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL.



IF YOU WANT TO CONNECT WITH ME ABOUT MY PROJECT, YOUR FAVORITE HIKING SPOTS, YOUR GARDENING ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OR ANYTHING AT ALL, SEND ME AN EMAIL

KAIMOUNTFORT@UVIC.CA



THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY WILL BE SHARED WITH THE DISTRICT OF SOOKE AND WITH ANYONE ELSE THAT IS INTERESTED, PLEASE JUST LET ME KNOW.



**University
of Victoria**

Annex 3 – Anonymous Questionnaire Participants Filled Out During Focus Group Sessions

1. Preventing pollution in air, soil and water.

Will the OCP reduce pollution of Sooke’s air, waters and soils, such as through minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and agricultural runoffs? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantl y contributing -3	Moderately contributing -2	Slightly contributing -1	Slightly reducing 1	Moderately reducing 2	Significantl y reducing 3
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Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to pollution:

2. Protect and manage waters and lands.

Will the OCP better protect and restore Sooke’s waters and lands, such as through effectively protecting carbon sinks, natural land covers, watersheds and wetlands? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantl y damaging -3	Moderately damaging -2	Slightly damaging -1	Slightly protecting and restoring 1	Moderately protecting and restoring 2	Significantl y protecting and restoring 3
-------------------------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------	---	---	---

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to protecting waters and lands:

3. Protecting animals, plants and biodiversity.

Will the OCP better protect Sooke’s animals, plants and biodiversity, such as through environmentally conscious land use policies and general considerations for wildlife? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantly damaging	Moderately damaging	Slightly damaging	Slightly protecting	Moderately protecting	Significantly protecting
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to protecting animals and plants:

4. Prosperity

Does the OCP promote a baseline level of prosperity among Sooke residents (e.g., encourages local economy, sustains employment opportunities, offers liveable income, accessible and affordable food and housing)? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantly demoting	Moderately demoting	Slightly demoting	Slightly promoting	Moderately promoting	Significantly promoting
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to prosperity:

5. Equity

Does the OCP promote equity among Sooke residents (e.g., promotes equitable access for all, fights gentrification, values an inclusive and diverse environment with regards to disabilities, gender, income, age, cultural origins). Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantly demoting	Moderately demoting	Slightly demoting	Slightly promoting	Moderately promoting	Significantly promoting
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to equity:

6. Health

Does the OCP promote health (e.g., mental and physical) among Sooke residents (e.g. does it encourage socialisation, physical activity, safe environments for children and aging people)? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantly demoting	Moderately demoting	Slightly demoting	Slightly promoting	Moderately promoting	Significantly promoting
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to health:

7. Governance

Is the District of Sooke well coordinated with the T’Sou-ke Nation and with the Capital Regional District, the BC and federal governments to ensure effective support for adequate implementation of the OCP?

Significantly uncoordinated	Moderately uncoordinated	Slightly uncoordinated	Slightly coordinated	Moderately coordinated	Significantly coordinated
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to governance:

8. Power relations.

Will the OCP contribute to empowering people and marginalized communities (e.g. is consultation with marginalized people planned, are shared decision-making and partnerships valued)? Circle **one** of the options below from -3 to 3.

Significantly disempowering	Moderately disempowering	Slightly disempowering	Slightly empowering	Moderately empowering	Significantly empowering
-3	-2	-1	1	2	3

Please write down any additional thoughts on the OCP relating to power relations:

9. Final thoughts

If you have any more thoughts on the OCP as it relates to planetary health, please summarize them below.

Annex 4 – Handout Provided to Focus Group Participants of Unique Policies and Actions from the District of Sooke’s Official Community Plan Organized by Community Policies, Tangible, Non-Tangible and T’sou-ke Nation Codings

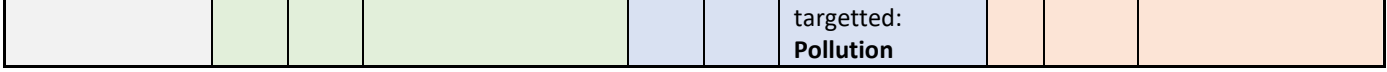
Community policies	Tangible			Non-tangible			T’sou-ke Nation		
	#	%	Examples	#	%	Examples	#	%	Examples
All unique community policies (n=196)	96	49%	NA	93	47%	NA	16	8%	NA
Agriculture and Food Systems	10	5%	Policy 4.6.5.2 Eliminate contamination of the Sooke Harbour and Basin to re-establish the local shellfish industry and traditional harvesting practices.	15	8%	Action 4.6.4.5 Explore opportunities for local property tax and other incentives to encourage food land preservation and production.	3	2%	Action 4.6.5.3 Collaborate with T’Sou-ke Nation and other Indigenous community members to identify and protect lands and waters supporting the gathering and harvesting of traditional foods.
			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Pollution			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Prosperity			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Land & Water
Arts and Culture	2	1%	Policy 4.8.3.3 Incorporate Indigenous naming, signage, and visibility across Sooke.	6	3%	Policy 4.8.1.1 Seek opportunities to involve artists in community planning processes, such as artist-in-residence programs, arts-based engagement methods, and artist-initiated public art programs.	6	3%	Action 4.8.1.2 Work with all cultural partners including T’Sou-ke Nation and other Indigenous communities to create an updated Arts and Culture Plan that provides a foundation for partnership models, cultural development processes, and cultural asset investment and

									management. This Plan will update the District of Sooke's Municipal Arts Program Policy (2009) and Sooke Region Cultural Plan (2011).
			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Power relations			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Power relations
Community Economic Development	10	5%	Action 4.7.3.3 Create a reserve fund to be used for community economic development initiatives.	11	6%	Action 4.7.4.6 Collaborate with new immigrant, training, and employment organizations to support incoming workforce.	1	1%	Policy 4.7.3.1 Support partnership opportunities with local private and public sector organizations, including T'Sou-ke Nation and other Indigenous peoples, to advance ongoing community improvements, offer local business support, attract external investment, and undertake joint marketing initiatives.
			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Prosperity			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targeted: Prosperity
Equitable Community	8	4%	Action 4.11.2.1 Provide justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) training for all District staff and Council.	3	2%	Action 4.11.2.2 Commit to prioritizing engagement with under-represented groups in all planning initiatives.	3	2%	Action 4.11.1.2 Through the MoU Working Group between the District and T'Sou-ke Nation, commit to developing an action plan to implement UNDRIP locally

			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity
Green Building	8	4%	Action 4.4.1.1 Build all new municipal buildings to net-zero emissions standards, meeting 100% of energy demand through renewable electrical means.	1	1%	Action 4.4.3.2 Prioritize building renovation permits targeting higher energy and emissions performance in the building permit application queue.	0	0%	NA
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Pollution			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Pollution			
Housing	11	6%	Action 4.9.5.2 Support the needs of households with children in multi-unit buildings by establishing the following requirements in the Zoning Bylaw: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum outdoor amenity spaces • Minimum number of two- and three-bedroom units 	22	11%	Action 4.9.4.5 Consider using District of Sooke land for future development that supports realization of housing objectives.	0	0%	NA
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Prosperity			
Infrastructure	10	5%	Action 4.5.1.4 Develop inspection procedures for high-risk infrastructure to identify damage resulting from extreme weather events.	3	2%	Policy 4.5.2.1 When planning new infrastructure, account for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health and safety; • Energy and emissions impacts; • Resilience to climate change impacts; 	0	0%	NA

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental responsibility; • Regulatory need; • Asset management principles; and, • Economic efficiencies and impact. 			
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Health			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Governance			
Natural Environment	18	9%	Action 4.2.1.6 Work with T'Sou-ke Nation, CRD, Provincial and Federal levels of government, and other non-profit stakeholders to identify, inventory, and protect provincially and federally listed species at risk, ecological communities at risk and wildlife habitat areas.	15	8%	Action 4.2.1.10 Encourage private stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas. Encourage landowners to protect, preserve, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas on private property through conservation tools such as conservation covenants, land trusts, and eco-gifting	3	2%	Action 4.2.1.9 Require meaningful collaboration with other government and nongovernment agencies, including T'Sou-ke Nation, when land use discussions and decisions are being undertaken within and adjacent to the District of Sooke.
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Biodiversity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Land & Water			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Governance
Parks and Trails	4	2%	Policy 4.3.3.3 Applying universal design principles to allow all ages and abilities to access and enjoy parks, and to use their amenities.	3	2%	Policy 4.3.3.1 Ensure that park spaces reflect the diverse identities and needs of the communities in which they are located by seeking to incorporate	0	0%	NA

						meaningful input from youth, seniors, and equity-seeking groups in park visioning, planning, and construction stages.			
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			
Recreation and Community Services	3	2%	Action 4.10.1.6 Complete an accessibility audit of all District of Sooke facilities and implement associated recommendations.	8	4%	Action 4.10.1.7 Work with the CRD, Sooke Community Association, SEAPARC and other non-profit organizations to expand recreational programming opportunities within existing facilities and secure new facilities where feasible.	0	0%	NA
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Equity			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Governance			
Transportation	12	6%	Action 4.1.2.3 Update the existing MoU with the Ministry of Transportation in order to realize shared multi-modal objectives for Highway 14, the Grant Road Connector, and associated municipal streets.	6	3%	Action 4.1.3.5 Support work-from-home, teleworking / co-work spaces in the Town Centre, car-pooling, car share operators, or other initiatives to reduce commuter travel.	0	0%	NA
			Main dimension of PHF targetted: Health			Main dimension of PHF			



Annex 5 – Relevant Questions by Dimension of the Planetary Health Framework (Brousselle & McDavid, 2021)

Pollution

- What pollutants (including upstream pollutants for intervention inputs) are attributable to the intervention? Chemicals, aerosols, CO₂, and so on
- How can we reduce pollution caused by the intervention?
- What are lower-impact alternative interventions? Can the delivery of the intervention be designed to reduce pollution-related effects?

Waters and Lands

- What is the impact of the intervention on land (e.g. on carbon sinks, on natural land cover) and on water (e.g. perturbations to rivers, freshwater use, ocean acidification)?
- How can we mitigate the negative impacts? Enhance positive impacts?
- What are lower-impact alternative interventions? Can the delivery of the intervention be designed to reduce degradation-related effects?

Biodiversity

- What impacts does the intervention have on biodiversity?
- What would be lower-impact alternatives? Can the delivery of the intervention be designed to reduce biodiversity-related negative effects?

Prosperity

- What measures need to be put in place to minimize negative economic impacts of the intervention on individuals and communities?
- How can the intervention be designed to give opportunities for households to achieve prosperity and to contribute to the goal of people meeting their essential needs?
- Does the intervention rely on the local economy and local expertise? What needs to be done to transfer expertise locally, to produce the intervention locally?
- Does the intervention contribute to building social capital? How? Could it do more?

Equity

- Who is excluded from the design and the evaluation of the intervention?
- Will the intervention (intended or unintended outcomes) increase inequality between some groups of the population?
- What has been done to reduce inequities? Could more be done to reduce inequities?
- Are there alternative interventions that could bring higher equity achievements while achieving the same expected goals?

Health

- What are the health-related impacts (positive and negative) of the intervention (individual, community, and population levels)?
- Are there ways to mitigate negative health impacts?
- Are there alternative interventions or intervention components that could bring greater health benefits? How could positive health impacts be enhanced?
- Are there ways of framing the intervention to include positive health benefits?

Governance

- What groups, entities, institutions have standing with respect to the design and implementation of the intervention?
- Are all relevant levels of government in agreement with respect to the intervention? Are laws and regulation in support of the intervention? Do they weaken or undermine the intervention?
- Are all levels of governance and all incentives coordinated in such a way that they offer optimal support to the implementation of the intervention? If not, what needs to
- be done at the governance level to improve support for or impacts of the interventions?
- Has implementation occurred? Fully or partially? Given the timeframe for the emergence of intended results, has there been a sustained effort to provide sufficient
- resources for the intervention? How has the intervention fared as leadership changes occurred?

Power Relations

- Who are the various stakeholders sharing a stake in the intervention? What are their interests?
- How are current corporate interests benefiting from the intervention?
- Who will lose from the implementation of the intervention? Who could be affected by changes to the status quo and in what ways? How can these effects be taken into account?
- What can be done to reduce resistance and protect the intervention implementation?
- What needs to be done to protect the implementers from external political pressures?
- What are the systemic implications of the intervention—are there systemic barriers to the intervention? Are there systemic biases that support the intervention

Annex 6 – Certificate of Approval from the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board



**University
of Victoria**

Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board
Michael Williams Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8960 | uvic.ca/research | ethics@uvic.ca

Certificate of Approval

<p>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Astrid Brousselle (Supervisor)</p> <p>PRINCIPAL APPLICANT: Kai Mountfort Master’s student</p> <p>UVIC DEPARTMENT: Public Administration PADM</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #e1eef6;">ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER</td> <td style="background-color: #e1eef6;">23-0062</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="background-color: #e1eef6;">Expedited review - delegated</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE:</td> <td>16-Oct-2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>APPROVED ON:</td> <td>16-Oct-2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td>APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE:</td> <td>15-Oct-2024</td> </tr> </table>	ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER	23-0062	Expedited review - delegated		ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE:	16-Oct-2023	APPROVED ON:	16-Oct-2023	APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE:	15-Oct-2024
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<p>PROJECT TITLE: Theory-based evaluation of the District of Sooke’s Official Community Plan from a Planetary Health perspective</p> <p>RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS: None</p> <p>DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING: None</p> <p>DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: tcps2_core_certificate KRM.pdf - 24-Feb-2023 Kai-Tsouke Initial engagement email.pdf - 23-Apr-2023 Kai-DoS engagement email.pdf - 23-Apr-2023 Questionnaire.docx - 23-Apr-2023 Focus group.docx - 23-Apr-2023 Kai Mountfort MPA solicitation email script 10132023.docx - 13-Oct-2023 Poster 10132023.pptx - 13-Oct-2023 Consent Form 10142023.docx - 13-Oct-2023</p>											

Conditions of approval

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Amendments

To make changes to the approved research procedure in your study, please submit "Amendments" or "Annual renewal with amendments" form. You must receive research ethics approval before proceeding with your amended protocol.

Renewals

Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures

When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria’s policies for research involving human participants.