



Shape Your Future Victoria

Natural Environment

Definition and description

An ecosystem is a particular biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment¹.

Many environmental issues are best considered at the level of the bioregion, a geographic area having common characteristics of soil, watershed, climate, native plants and animals. A bioregion is defined by the boundaries of human communities and natural ecological systems rather than political boundaries².

¹ Environment Canada

² based on: 1977. Berg, Peter and Raymond Dasmann, "Reinhabiting California, The Ecologist 7, no. 10 (3). (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Why is this topic important?

Population growth, settlement patterns, human consumption, industrial uses and transportation have impacted the quality of air, water and land in cities particularly since the Industrial Revolution.

Sustainable communities recognize and protect the environmental, economic and social value of natural resources and assess costs of human activity in land use decisions. These can have direct impacts on the environment, such as the preservation of natural habitats and landscapes. They can also indirectly improve environmental conditions through choices such as fewer vehicles on roads to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).

Planning for local energy, water and land needs in response to global climate change and limited supplies of natural resources helps to strengthen the capacity of human settlements to adapt to climate change. Many environmental planning issues require solutions at the scale of bioregions and collaboration among governments, departments, agencies and organizations.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Ideas and Options for the Future

June 25 and 26 - Topic Insert



Public Input on the Natural Environment

Proposed Goal 1 From Public Input <i>Restore the Ecological Integrity of Land Use</i>	
Direction: <i>Biodiversity</i>	Direction: <i>Green Spaces</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt targets for biodiversity and ecological function. • Biodiversity in the City is increased by 50% • Preserve, retain and restore biological and cultural heritage. • Improved biodiversity. • Biodiversity thrives on every conceivable public and private surface. • No net loss of ecological capacity for site-specific development: arable land; trees; permeability; food production. • An improved, diverse shoreline better than today. • Biodiversity corridors connect through all neighbourhoods and along the waterfront, particularly through the urban forest. • Removal of black top in biodiversity corridors identified in Greenways Plan • Daylight streams wherever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No net loss of green space. • Greening of harbour side parking lots. • Taller buildings with smaller development footprints that allow parks/open space. • Lots of green open space. • More parks including pocket parks. • Lots of trees, linked by greenways. • Put Fruit trees on streets and in parks. • Viable roof gardens. • Boulevard gardens. • More space given over to community gardens. • Native plants. • Plant trees on newly developed pedestrian streets downtown. • Green space is important, at risk and should be a priority.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Natural Diversity and Habitat:	<i>Biodiversity thrives in Victoria's urban environment, including urban forests, and public and private green spaces.</i>
Aquatic Ecosystems:	<i>Victoria's Harbour, coastline, ponds and streams support healthy populations of fish and other marine life.</i>

Public Input on the Natural Environment

Proposed Goal 2 From Public Input : <i>Transform the Urban Environment</i>	
Direction: <i>Targets and Practices</i>	Direction: <i>Green Infrastructure</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdisciplinary approach to city – across City departments. • Invest in actions that make real change (e.g.: mode-shifting transportation, create parks and greenways, do not waste resources on fads like green roofs). • Expand use of environmental development permits for biodiversity corridors. • Guidelines and clear goals for developers to reach. • City uses a sustainability checklist for development review that goes beyond just parking provision. • Park dedication for taller buildings. • City pro-actively purchases green space proximate to where density is going. • Garden requirement for new development (incl. rooftops) • Restructure above ground parking to put parking underground and more productive/greener uses above. • More school sustainability initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better/ expanded recycling systems. • Public recycling bins on streets. • Implement a versatile curb-side pick up recycling program that encompasses: soft plastics, batteries, tetra packs, foil lined wrappers, etc... • Community-based waste disposal system. Dumpsters for whole neighbourhoods centralized, makes disposal easier, saves greenhouse gasses. • Sewage is treated appropriately and no longer dumped in the ocean • Sewage treatment needs to be more efficient due to increased density • Free rain barrel distribution. • Subsidize and install rain catchment systems for willing residents and city gardens/buildings. • Ecological education on rainwater harvesting and composting and target apartment dwellers.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Solid Waste:	<i>The waste stream to the regional landfill has been reduced to a minimum with recovery, reuse, recycling and composting of materials undertaken as a standard practice.</i>
Liquid Waste (sanitary):	<i>Efficient and effective liquid waste management protects human health and the natural environment and makes use of resource potential.</i>
Rainwater	<i>Rainwater resources are carefully managed with collection, diversion and re-use practices that moderate run-off volumes and maximize water quality.</i>

Existing Policies on the Natural Environment

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
Natural Diversity and Habitat:	<i>Biodiversity thrives in Victoria's urban environment, including urban forests, and public and private green spaces.</i>	
Aquatic Ecosystems:	<i>Victoria's Harbour, coastline, ponds and streams support healthy populations of fish and other marine life.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote preservation of habitat, development of new parks and green spaces, review existing guidelines for landscaping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth must be managed carefully to mitigate any potential impact on the area's natural ecosystems or quality of life for residents. Maximize the ecological functioning of parks and open space through their design and function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Master Plan under development to guide management of parks and natural spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and preserve, enhance and restore remaining significant natural landscape features and natural indigenous habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve and enhance the functioning of natural systems by encouraging environmental sustainability in land development and re-development, building design and transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tree Preservation Bylaw outlines regulations to protect and preserve trees Pesticide Use Reduction Bylaw outlines non-essential use of pesticides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile an inventory of significant shoreline features, vistas and view corridors, and natural habitats to be identified in local plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce elements – such as new or enhanced green spaces and urban forest – that maintain the livability of the Downtown Core Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Forest Management Plan (Draft) includes inventory and framework for action for trees on public and private lands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect important remaining shoreline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore shoreline conditions and enhance aquatic ecosystems as and when possible. 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend recycling programs further to include all material which can be recycled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage waste facilities (three-stream) in new multi-residential development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRD Solid Waste Management Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate to achieve a high standard of water quality in Juan de Fuca Strait and Victoria Harbour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage private development to expand and enhance on-site open space and landscaping to address urban runoff and drainage issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRD Core Area Liquid Waste Management Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate storm water management and urban forest management considerations into street redesign projects. Incorporate permeable surfaces in the design of open spaces and building setbacks to reduce storm water runoff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storm Water Bylaw No. 01-154 guides business or residential property owners to minimize groundwater contamination