

C12 - Triple Bottom Line Assessment: A Practical Sustainability Tool

Presentation title: Triple Bottom Line Assessment - A Practical Sustainability Tool

Presenters:

Kim Fowler - Pottinger Gaherty Consultants Ltd

Carola Bloedorn - Director of Development, Dockside Green

Abstract

Corporations across the world, including municipal government, have been widely criticized for their continuing dependence upon financial accounting and reporting as the sole or primary means of decision making and measuring corporate success. Global warming, super virus outbreaks and the oil crisis are substantive results of a finance-centric corporate world. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a framework for encouraging corporate responsibility for sustainability by equally balancing economic, environmental and social assessment criteria (1/3 each). Initially intended as a philosophy about sustainability, it has become a common tool for corporate accounting and reporting. In 1962, Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* stated that: Humankind's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But humans are a part of nature, and our war against nature is inevitably a war against ourselves... [We are] challenged as humankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves. In a basic analysis of physics, one control point does not provide adequate support and failure is imminent. A minimum of three control points is required for stability and sustainability. A healthy functioning ecosystem calls this stability/sustainability a stasis point. Changing conditions require adjustment in the stasis point as a basic function. Failure to balance or adjust to a stasis point results in sickness, and if unchanged, eventual death of the ecosystem. The steward has become the student. The TBL focuses corporations not just on the economic value they add, but also on the environmental and social value they add – and destroy. At its narrowest, TBL is used as a framework for measuring and reporting corporate performance against economic, social and environmental criteria. At its broadest, the term is used to capture the whole set of values, issues and processes that corporations must address in order to minimize any harm resulting from their activities and to create economic, social and environmental value. This involves being clear about the corporation's purpose and considering the needs of all the company's stakeholders. TBL assessment attempts to provide a comparative summary tool for the integrated, complex and changing conditions of our ecosystem. It is one attempt to master ourselves and find a sustainable stasis point. Several examples of TBL assessment will be presented including a Sustainability Checklist for land development applications, a decision matrix for annual budget requests and municipal land sales, including the Victoria Dockside Green project. Duration 30 minutes
Presentation on sustainability principles, their application to TBL practice & 3-4 TBL projects, including TBL matrices for fiscal management, planning applications and land sales. 30 minutes
Presentation on the Victoria Dockside Green project, which has achieved the highest LEED point total in the world for the first phase of the 15-acre site. The project has won over 15 national to provincial awards for sustainability. TBL tools were an integral part of the project development and continue to be used currently. 15 minutes
Questions and answers 75 minutes total

Speaker Biography

Kim Fowler is a Full Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and a municipal sustainability expert with a proven record of successfully implementing sustainability frameworks and projects in several municipalities. She has over 18 years of experience in Ontario, Alberta and BC at three levels of government in over six communities. As the project co-manager for the Dockside project in the City of Victoria, Kim led an integrated team of professionals to develop an innovative land sale process which attracted and rewarded sustainability proponents. The Dockside project has been described as the most sustainable neighbourhood development in North America by ascribing to LEED Platinum for all 15 acres. Kim then customized a sustainability initiative for the City of Port Coquitlam, which integrated interdepartmental responsibilities and sustainability best practices for land development. The initiative was awarded a Smart Growth BC award in 2006. Triple bottom line assessment tools were used throughout both projects on several levels and were critical to the projects' success. As senior consultant

for Pottinger Gaherty Ltd, Kim is providing integrated, innovative and practical solutions to sustainability projects in both the public and private sectors.

Carola Bloedorn is a registered Architect and LEED accredited member. She has over 20 years of experience working with both the private and public sector creating master plans and sustainable communities. Over the last 7 years she has worked on the Dockside Green project, first as a Development Consultant to the City of Victoria providing real estate advice for the sale of the Dockside Lands, and most recently, as the Director of Development for Dockside Green Ltd. Partnership, (the Developer of the Dockside Green project). She has been involved in all aspects of the development, from preliminary analysis of the property, through public consultation and preliminary planning to the drafting of the ground breaking request for proposals from developers, using a triple bottom line evaluation matrix. The culmination of this process was the completion of a Master Development Agreement between the City and the Developer. As Director of Development, she is now responsible for all aspects of the development, from ensuring that it complies with the Master Development Agreement, to obtaining regulatory approvals for green infrastructure such as the waste water treatment facility and the biomass facility, and establishing the building program and design criteria and managing the consulting team to ensure the Platinum LEED certification of all buildings.