



## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE RESILIENT CITIES 2012 CONGRESS**

**Session title:** Achieving effective integrated adaptation approaches

**Presentation title:** Triple Bottom Line Assessment:

**Subtitle:** Practical Tools for Local Government

### **Abstract:**

Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a framework for encouraging local government responsibility for sustainability by equally balancing economic, environmental and social assessment criteria. TBL assessment attempts to provide a comparative summary tool for the integrated, complex and changing conditions of our ecosystem. Several examples of TBL assessment will be presented including a Sustainability Checklist for land development applications – the first in North America, a decision matrix for annual budget requests, and municipal land sales, including the land sale bid which led to development of the highest LEED point total in the world. These case studies will explain the fundamental changes to the processes, decisions and outcomes within local governments, which enabled achievement of sustainability goals and objectives.

### **Keywords:**

Triple Bottom Line tools, changing, complex, sustainability, local government

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## Full paper

Corporations across the world, including local 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.

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 its clients. 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.

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### Bio:

Kim is a municipal sustainability expert with a proven record of successfully implementing sustainability frameworks and projects in several Canadian municipalities, including the cities of Victoria & Port Coquitlam. She is a former Director of Sustainability for the City of Victoria and a full member of the Canadian Institute of Planners. She project managed the development concept and land sale of the Victoria Docks lands, which were awarded the highest LEED™ Platinum point total in the world (63 of a total of 70 points) for the first two phases of development by the successful land sale developers.

### Attachments:

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