

NO:

COUNCIL DATE:

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **October 31, 2019**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture
Acting General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Planning & Development**

FILE: **0512-02**

SUBJECT: **Update to Surrey's Community Climate Action Strategy**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, the Engineering Department, and the Planning & Development Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Endorse the following next steps to update Surrey's Community Climate Action Strategy:
 - a. Staff to report back to Council within six months on proposed revisions to the existing corporate and community greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets; and
 - b. Staff to report back within one year with an updated Community Climate Action Strategy.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide further information of the growing body of knowledge on the impacts of climate change and recommend a series of next steps for Surrey that will ensure staff are able to build on the strengths of the existing Community Climate Action Strategy, maintain Surrey's eligibility for the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program ("CARIP") grant and further align actions across other departments to maximize the benefits to Surrey residents and businesses.

BACKGROUND

At its Regular meeting on March 11, 2019, Council received Corporate Report No. R048; 2019 (attached as Appendix "I") that provided an update on the implementation of the Surrey Community Climate Action Strategy. Over the past ten years, Surrey has demonstrated climate action leadership through initiatives such as the Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy ("CFAS"), the Surrey Biofuel Facility and Surrey City Energy among many other initiatives detailed in Appendix "I". Surrey's leadership was again recognized in September 2019 with the Community Energy Association's Climate & Energy Action Award for the City's leadership on climate resilience in developing CFAS, and an Honourable Mention from the Union of BC Municipalities for Excellence in Service Delivery for the City's Integrated Sustainability Education Program. Staff are now looking to the next ten years of City action on climate change.

The latest scientific research on climate change coupled with real-time observed impacts are putting into focus the need to do more to reduce and ultimately eliminate greenhouse gas emissions (“GHGs”). While progress has been made in this area, taking steps now to improve and advance Surrey’s Community Climate Action Strategy, the City is well positioned to:

1. Continue to leverage additional financial support from senior levels of government;
2. Lead the way forward with innovative approaches to reducing GHGs; and
3. Collaborate with other local governments and economic partners to combine efforts and accelerate action.

While the extent of the future impacts of climate change are uncertain, it is now clear that the earth is warming which will require costly adaptive measures in order to protect Surrey residents and businesses. The less action taken now to reduce GHGs the more costly and difficult it will be to adapt to the impacts later.

DISCUSSION

Surrey’s Community Climate Action Strategy includes both the Climate Adaptation Strategy (“CAS”) and Community Energy and Emissions Plans (“CEEP”). The CAS identifies the risks that Surrey is expected to face as a result of climate change and proposes actions to minimize the unavoidable costs and impacts while fostering a resilient community. It covers areas such as:

- Flood management and drainage;
- Infrastructure;
- Ecosystems and natural areas;
- Urban trees and landscaping;
- Human health and safety; and
- Agriculture and food security.

The CEEP provides a guide to reducing city-wide GHGs to reduce Surrey’s impact on future climate change as well as the amount of money Surrey residents spend on energy every year. It considers our influence over land use, transportation, buildings, energy infrastructure and solid waste. Together, this award-winning framework was identified as the first integrated mitigation/adaptation strategy in Canada at the time it was adopted.

One of the key functions of the City’s Sustainability Office is to work in collaboration with the other City departments to identify opportunities to advance actions from the CAS and CEEP within existing initiatives or operations. One such example is the development of the CFAS which followed from the work done through the CAS that identified coastal flooding from sea level rise as the highest climate-associated risk facing Surrey. The development of this strategy identified several infrastructure assets that required upgrading to protect Surrey neighborhoods that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As a direct result of this proactive planning process, the City was awarded over \$76 million from the Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (“DMAF”) to support the construction or improvement of 13 of these assets. Through this project, Surrey continues to lead the way on climate change adaptation.

The Surrey Biofuel Facility is another example of a project, initiated in support of the CEEP, that attracted significant amounts of Federal government funding. Constructed in 2016, this project reduces GHGs associated with Surrey’s waste collection services and generates renewable natural

gas (“RNG”), which is used to fuel the trucks that collect the waste. RNG produced at this facility is also used to power the City’s district energy system, further reducing GHGs. This innovative approach to waste collection and RNG production was successful in attracting a grant from the Federal government for 25% of the cost of the \$70 million facility. As a result of Surrey’s leadership in this area, the City was sought by the province to help shape the policy and regulation around organic waste diversion and RNG accounting.

GHG Reduction Targets and Reporting Requirements

Another function of the Sustainability Office is to measure GHGs both from the City’s corporate operations and from the community and to report this information publicly. In 2010, Council adopted the Corporate GHG Emissions Action Plan, which included a target to reduce corporate GHG emissions by 20% by 2020. In the same year, the City also adopted community wide GHG reduction targets in the City’s Official Community Plan (“OCP”):

- A 33% per capita GHG reduction by 2020; and
- An 80% per capita GHG reduction by 2050.

Providing information annually on the City’s GHGs and reporting publicly on the progress toward the City’s climate action goals makes Surrey eligible to receive the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (“CARIP”) grant from the Provincial government, which is a rebate on the carbon tax paid by the City based on its corporate operations. These funds are intended to assist municipalities in reducing GHGs and have been used to support the operations of the Sustainability Office in Surrey. In order to maintain eligibility for the CARIP grant, it will be important to update the existing 2020 targets with new interim targets before the end of 2020.

Considering the latest climate science coupled with the continuing trend of more severe climate impacts occurring much sooner than expected, jurisdictions in the region and across the globe are updating their GHG targets to align with reductions required to keep global warming to safe levels. As new funding programs roll out at the Provincial and Federal level, it will be increasingly important for Surrey to demonstrate that it is following this best practice with regards to GHG targets.

Embedding Climate Action Across Departments

As is highlighted in the DMAF and Surrey Biofuel projects, initiatives that have strong connections to forward-thinking climate action are well-positioned to receive financial support from senior levels of government. The Federal government has recently established a guideline that infrastructure grants for projects over \$10 million require a GHG mitigation assessment as part of the application. While this was not a formal requirement in the past, the Sustainability Office has historically focused on embedding the principles of the Community Climate Action Strategy into the work of other departments and identifying future funding opportunities. Given the mounting level of public support for climate action, the expected response from senior levels of government will be to increase levels of funding for projects that have an impact. The municipalities best positioned to take advantage of that funding will be those with ‘shovel-ready’ projects that align with their strategy to achieve these updated GHG targets

Climate action planning is an emerging field that is being advanced in different ways across jurisdictions in Canada and globally. Staff in the Sustainability Office engage with intergovernmental groups across the Metro Vancouver region as well as more broadly across

North America to share best practices and learn about new approaches to climate action planning. Eliminating GHGs is a global imperative that requires governments of all levels to work together. Surrey has been a demonstrated leader in climate action planning creating a path for other cities to follow. Likewise, there are many lessons we can learn from other jurisdictions to help our transition to a zero-GHG economy.

Next Steps

Surrey's existing GHG reduction targets need to be updated to remain relevant beyond 2020. This will be important to ensure that Surrey continues to receive the annual CARIP grant which helps supports the City's overall sustainability goals. Further, by aligning these targets with current best practice, Surrey will be better positioned to receive financial support from senior levels of government as opportunities arise. The first recommended next step in this report is for staff to report back to Council within six months with proposed revisions to the existing corporate and community GHG reduction targets.

Surrey's existing GHG reduction targets were adopted in 2010 and the associated plans and policies required to meet those targets were largely unknown at the time. Since that time, advances have been made in the field of climate action and many of the solutions required are now in place across different jurisdictions around the world. The second recommended next step is for staff to report back within one year with an updated Community Climate Action Strategy that details specific actions and policies that will be required to meet the proposed GHG targets. Assumptions has shifted in the past year and existing plans and strategies need to be updated to account for the latest information, as well as senior government policy and resource allocation. Staff will look at the current suite of plans and strategies and propose updates and more detailed, sector-specific actions to reflect these changes.

The ultimate success of Surrey's Community Climate Action Strategy will require that staff across all departments are engaged in the planning process so that opportunities to integrate new initiatives within existing plans and budgets can be identified. Further, broad staff engagement in the planning process will lead to a sense of collective ownership over the plan and actions better designed to succeed.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The work of the Community Climate Action Strategy supports the objectives of the Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to the Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Built Environments & Neighbourhoods, and Infrastructure. Specifically, the initiatives support the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Neighbourhoods & Urban Design - DO 9: All aspects of planning, design and construction include climate change impacts, GHG mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies.
- Emergency Preparedness & Prevention - DO 8: The community's critical infrastructure and systems are designed to withstand climate change impacts, natural events and disasters, and include emergency response and reconstruction plans;
- Energy & Climate - DO 6: The City anticipates changing weather patterns and sea level rise as a result of climate change, and implements appropriate infrastructure, land use planning and emergency response solutions that will be resilient over the long term; and
- Energy & Climate - DO 7: Per capita emissions are low and align with global GHG reduction targets.

CONCLUSION

The next steps recommended in this report are intended to address climate change risks facing Surrey residents and to guide the City's path to a zero-GHG community. By taking these steps now to improve and advance the Community Climate Action Strategy, Surrey is well positioned to continue to leverage additional financial support from senior levels of government; lead the way forward with innovative approaches to reducing GHG's; and collaborate with other local governments and economic partners to combine efforts and accelerate action.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Scott Neuman, P. Eng.
Acting General Manager,
Engineering

Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning & Development

Appendix "I": Corporate Report No. Ro48; 2019



CORPORATE REPORT

NO: R048

COUNCIL DATE: March 11, 2019

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **March 6, 2019**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **0512-02**
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Planning & Development

SUBJECT: **Update on Implementation of Community Climate Action Strategy**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department, the Engineering Department and the Planning & Development Department that Council receive this report for information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the implementation of the Community Climate Action Strategy (the "Strategy").

BACKGROUND

There is a firm understanding among the public that climate change represents a significant threat to established social, economic, and infrastructure systems and must be met with equally significant mitigation efforts (reducing greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions) and adaptation efforts (preparing for the anticipated and existing impacts of climate change). In 2016, Canada joined nearly 200 countries as a signatory to the Paris Climate Agreement, which commits nations to pursuing mitigation actions to keep warming to under 1.5°C above preindustrial levels. In 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ("IPCC") released a Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. The Report outlines the consequences of continued GHG emissions and describes the rapid and unprecedented transition required to keep warming to safe levels, as well as the multitude of benefits that result from doing so. If GHG emissions and associated warming are not addressed at all levels of government, it will have very real consequences including here in Surrey, such as the potential loss of farmland and biodiversity, rising health impacts from extreme heat and wildfire smoke, and significant infrastructure failure.

Leading governments around the world continue to ramp up both mitigation and adaptation policies and actions. Climate change has been identified as both a National and Provincial priority, most notably through the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change and CleanBC, both of which focus on reducing GHG emissions while expanding the clean-growth economy.

