

Surrey Climate Action Panel & Ask Me Anything – June 23, 2021

Event Summary

This was an online event held on Zoom, open to the public. About 35 people attended. The event included three presentations, interspersed with polls and Q&A. Questions submitted at the event, and City responses, have been posted in the “Questions” section of this webpage, tagged with “June 23”.

Agenda:

1. **Opening remarks and land acknowledgement** – Jason Owen, Manager of Sustainability and Energy Services, City of Surrey.
2. **Technology and event overview** – Susanna Haas Lyons, Facilitator
 - a) *Poll: in what Surrey community do you live?*
 - b) *Poll: how concerned are you about climate change?*
3. **Speakers**
 - a) Speaker #1 – Sustainabilateens – Arshia Uppal – Youth perspectives on the climate emergency.
 - b) Speaker #2 – Fraser Health Authority – Amy Lubik and Korine Deol – health and equity impacts of climate change, and opportunities for climate action through designing our built environment.
 - c) *Poll: What stands out to you from these presentations?*
 - d) *Quiz: From what you know, which of the following contributes the most to Surrey’s carbon pollution?*
 - e) Speaker #3 – Lise Townsend, Project Manager, City of Surrey – overview of the Climate Action framework, and how to get involved and provide feedback.
4. **Questions and Answers**, submitted via Chat and Slido
5. **Closing remarks** – Jason Owen

Presentation #1 by Arshia Uppal Sustainabilateens – Climate Justice in Surrey

- Purpose: Sustainabilateens is a grassroots organization that offers youth a safe space amongst young people trying to create safe to engage with climate issues in Surrey
- Started in November 2019 and worked with sister organization, Climate Clock, worked with Surrey for Future and worked to convince Surrey’s Council to declare a Climate Emergency
- Rallied public support, present delegation, engaged conversation with Council
- Took a lot of work, cannot spend time to convince political leaders on importance on fighting against climate crisis
- Need to establish precedent for what is expected from City which is exactly what CCAS is doing
- Youth are anxious talking to politicians, we are serious about the strategy
- CCAS is able to change things and draw more attention to City Council and increase community engagement
- Vast majority of Surrey residents are unaware, remain complacent

- Youth are scared that today's goals are not met tomorrow, and not able to pass motions through the political systems
- CCAS gives hope and community change to learn about climate crisis, – supportive and show plans are beginning to move forward

Presentation #2: Amy Lubik and Korine Deol, Fraser Health Authority

- Discussed on health impacts of climate change and benefits of taking action
- In BC, people are already experiencing extremely hot weather leading to more heat related deaths and more calls
- Events impact most vulnerable in community (e.g. systemic marginalization, isolated, pre-existing)
- Vulnerability – consider newcomers to Canada and Indigenous folks as a result of more impact of colonization and system racism that put them more at risk
- Vulnerability = (Exposure (e.g. high temp X Sensitivity (pre-existing conditions)) + Adaptive Capacity
 - Adaptability is what can we do as communities and plans have in place to make sure people are safe
- Half a degree of temperature difference has great impacts of food security, people's health
- E.g. Chicago heat wave in 2003 responsible to 700+ deaths– older people didn't want to go outside b/c fear of crime; People were socially isolated
- Interventions need to be neighbourhood specific and target neighbourhood level interventions w/ social cohesion/inclusion
- This means having complete, compact communities – introducing building community – mixed used housing, more affordable and access to transit
- People feel more connected in community – more physical active and leads to overall better health
- Integrating landscape, access to green space, and are walkable are part of C – lowers temperature, cleans in the air
- Taking action to be resilient to climate change improves community's health

Question to Audience: What stands out to you from these presentations?

Responses:

- *our brave youth deserve action that will make a real impact*
- *Genuine care and consideration.*
- *The effects of climate change are multi-faceted and affect all areas of life*
- *Our interrelatedness*
- *I am wondering what could we do to increase awareness in the community?*
- *What stands out is that there isn't a mention of reducing consumption as a way to reduce the impact on our environment*
- *I love that our Youth are anxious to work on this issue.*
- *it shouldn't be up to the people to do actions when our leaders sign emergency declarations and Paris*

- *Youth deserve a future they can look forward to and not be frightened of*
- *We all need to work together to make a difference.*
- *Since green space is good for our mental health, I would say that moves to reduce greenspace and create more concrete are especially challenging to our health*
- *equity is huge and needs to be worked into the strategy*
- *Greenspace is key! Trees, forested areas*
- *Government doesn't seem to clue in to the degree needed.*
- *we need more parks and to protect the ones we have*
- *Attacks on Surrey green spaces? Bear Creek Park?*
- *how multiple different organizations are playing a role in creating awareness and mobilizing action.*
- *The importance maintaining and growing the tree canopy and green spaces for our health and wellbeing.*

Presentation #3: Lise Townsend, City of Surrey

- Emissions inventory graph: on-road GHG's responsible for 46% of carbon pollution - largest portion
- 40% comes from buildings – 96% comes from natural gas for space and hot water heating
- The climate crisis is real, and happening here and now. But the choices we make now can reduce negative consequences – and provide benefits to health and economy
- CCAS will be a roadmap to get to net-zero, and improve resilience to climate change impacts
- An overview of each of the five components/branches of the framework, framed by what is our status Now; the vision for 2050 (“Wow”), and what needs to change? (“How?”) For example:
- **Neighbourhoods** - Built environment has huge impact on emissions – how we plan communities has significant impact on GHGs and health
 - Now: Town centres and new growth areas planned with daily needs close to home; but most of city is still very reliant on driving.
 - Wow: Vision 2050 – Most people can meet daily needs within a short walk, cycle or roll from home; frequent transit connects neighbourhoods and jobs centres; greenspace.
 - How? Plan for growth in areas close to transit and amenities (Official Community Plan), allow variety of types of housing and small shops etc.; improve walking and cycling networks.
- Other branches were presented in a similar way; refer to video and fact sheets on this webpage for details.

Q&A Section:

Note: responses to additional questions submitted are posted in the Questions section of this webpage.

1) Topic: Interim GHG Targets

45% Emissions Cut target for 2030 related to IPCC? How does CCAS Fit?

Since vehicles account for nearly half of Surrey's emissions, why are there no interim targets (IPCC targets 45% reduction by 2030) in the transportation plan?

Jason:

- Initial response for Climate Emergency was to look at IPCC to ensure that targets align to general direction of report.
- Framework is focused on 2050 vision, setting right subsector vision/measures and it's not a complete plan yet so that's why getting input to shape plan
- Final plan will have interim targets up to 2050, and subsector targets to drive work across work over different departments

Don (Transportation):

- Work in progress in terms of shorter term plan targets, whereas Transportation department has developed long-range vision plan for 50-years, has long-range vision
- Goals of Transportation Plan: plan in process now – Phase 3 – feedback on vision and bold moves. Encourage to take survey as indicated and based on 5 key pillars that council approved (one is “tackling the Climate Crisis”)
- Proposing bold moves and require feedback from community

2) Topic: Electric Vehicles

How does City support low carbon plans in particular for freight trucks and delivery vehicles?

How does City address equity issues for EV's with respect to charging infrastructure for old buildings?

Are there ways for municipalities to offer EV incentives and home charging?

Jason:

- EV's will play a key role despite that vehicle traffic will still be an issue by 2050
- City working on increasing opportunities for people to charge at home/work
- Medium and Heavy Duty Vehicles – technology is not as advanced
- Equity is critical question as EV's not solution for everyone
- Goes back to broader strategy that focuses for all forms of transportation

Max:

EV Strategy

- Equity is an issue as it's harder to install charging in older buildings;
- One of areas that we plan to work with regional and provincial gov's to support multi family charging installations
- We are advocating for right to charge legislation
- Public EV chargers – chargers need to be close to older buildings
- Medium and Heavy Duty vehicles – broader solutions needed that consider biofuels through regional government collaboration; recognize it will take longer to decarbonize than light-duty vehicles

3) Topic: Road Expansion and 84th Ave

How can we reconcile the 84th Ave project paving over key GIN corridors with the goal of environmental protection and the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy?

How will expanding 84th Avenue from Scott Road to Fraser Highway help us achieve "Safe, Zero-Carbon Transportation" and "Resilient, Zero-Carbon Neighbourhoods"

Jason:

- Recognize fast growth in Surrey and expect in long term, infrastructure and land use decisions to address existing land-use patterns
- 2050 Vision looks to what Surrey will look like in 2050 with one million people and considering trade-offs
- CCAS focuses on developing a framework where can make complicated decisions over time and deal what's most important with residents

Don:

- Significant discussion on how to accommodate growth, Town Centres are all growing and needs for a finer grained network to allow grid for people to walk and cycle
- Balance that ensuring there's available choices
- Will still do road building and meeting GHG targets and Vision doesn't mean we aren't building roads
- Roads are being design to do much more than just move cars and trucks – contributing safety and access improvements that give people more options, 84th Ave expansion, is being built with more bike lanes that provides people with more transportation access

4) Topic: CCAS engaging entire community

How to ensure that plan is responsive to community to a whole?

Council has already refused to do land acknowledgments during council meetings. How will Surrey ensure that Indigenous voices are included in the CCAS?

Jason:

- Important to hear from a broad range of voices and recognize that Surrey has largest urban Indigenous community in BC
- City is doing broad engagement with today's event and in future. Recognize lot of voices can't be heard and there may be barriers through traditional means
- City has been in touch with Land-Based Surrey Nations to participate in CCAS process and looking at equity approach for all engagement to ensure that we are hearing from all voices

5) Topic: Need to act quickly

Why are we waiting until 2050?

What specific policies can be enacted quickly in one year?

What are actions that can be done in short-term 2-3 years?

Jason:

- With pace of growth in emissions, land-use patterns enable to help reduce need for personal vehicles
- Focus is on operating emissions → focus on buildings no buildings.
- Framework now is vision and targets that will drive details action

Lise:

- Many short-term opportunities, for example:
 - o Buildings: Ensuring that new construction is free from fossil fuels and this could start as early as next year, if we are given authority from the Province.
 - o Issue is City doesn't have complete authority to enact zero carbon in buildings, but Surrey is collaborating with Regional & Provincial government to enable this for new construction
- Transportation: Cycling network could be built out within a few years, if we can show strong support in the community in invest in connected cycling routes
- Land use policy:
 - o Can take initial steps now like changes in Zoning Bylaw and OCP
 - o Policy changes and happen now, but build-out will take longer

6) Topic: Existing Buildings

Surrey charges a permit fee to put solar panels on your home. Other jurisdictions offer grants/incentives. What is Surrey planning?

Is there an ongoing effort to catalog existing buildings for the sake of developing a retrofit strategy? Expected completion by...?

Jason:

- In BC, solar panels hasn't been a huge focus because electricity is so clean, however City would like to remove barriers for solar installations
- Building Retrofits – City Developing a tool that catalogues all building and GHG's with specific purpose to develop Existing Building Retrofit Strategy and expect to launch next year

Max:

- One of biggest challenges is that existing building stock turnover takes a long time and is large, multi-decade effort
- City is developing a data tool to use to make data-supported decisions on how to achieve retrofits which pulls from various sources (e.g. Census, BC Hydro, FortisBC)
- Prelim impact of full electrification of grid for homes and buildings