



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

DATE: October 16, 2019

Report No. DEV-19-055

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Tricia deMacedo, Planner II - Policy and Bill Brown, Director of Development Services

SUBJECT:

Climate Action Planning Project

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Does Council agree with the underlying principles and process for the Township of Esquimalt Climate Action Planning Project as outlined in the attached Terms of Reference?

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Committee Of The Whole receive Staff Report No. DEV-19-055 and the Climate Action Progress Report (Appendix A) for information, provide additional direction to staff as the COTW considers advisable, and direct staff to prepare a request for proposals (RFP) for the Climate Action Planning Project as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Appendix B);
2. That the COTW recommend that Council endorse the proposed target to reduce corporate emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 as recommended by the IPCC in order to immediately achieve Milestone 2 of the Partners for Climate Protection five milestone framework; and
3. That the COTW recommend that Council commit to Esquimalt becoming a 100% renewable energy community by 2050.

BACKGROUND:

The climate crisis is already causing serious environmental, social, health, and economic problems for Canadians and these are projected to become much worse in the coming years. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a new report, authored by over 91 scientists from 40 different countries, on the impacts of global heating of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The report highlights a number of impacts that could be avoided by limiting global heating to 1.5°C compared to 2°C or more. The report finds that the 1.5°C scenario would require that emissions of CO₂ would need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050. One of the key messages of this report is that while we are already seeing the consequences of a global 1°C rise in temperature, the impacts that would face the planet at a 2°C scenario could be catastrophic.

The success of current emissions reduction efforts will determine the severity of future climate impacts, which are anticipated to escalate after 2050. Adaptation to these impacts is also essential because global temperatures have already risen and will continue to rise even if we were to eliminate all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions today. Therefore, it is important to plan responses to climate change impacts that cannot be avoided (adaptation), while at the same time reducing emissions to minimize future impacts (mitigation).

The Township has targets in the Official Community Plan for GHG reductions since 2010 and has been reporting on its organizational (corporate) emissions since 2012. Current targets for the reduction of GHG in the municipality are as follows:

1. Take action to reduce community GHG emissions by at least 38% by 2030, compared to 2007 levels; and
2. Strive for the ultimate objective of carbon neutrality by realizing zero net community GHG emissions by 2050

A summary of the Township's corporate and community GHG inventories, climate actions to date and progress towards targets is provided in the attached 'Climate Action Progress Report' (Appendix A). The Township is currently in the process of developing a plan for climate adaptation through a partnership with ICLEI Canada on the 'Together for Climate' Project. The timeline for completion of this project is spring of 2020. However, despite this work and like many other municipalities, the Township has difficulty in achieving any significant and enduring decline in both corporate and community emissions.

Given the dire warnings from the IPCC recently, a number of governments around the world have declared a 'climate emergency'. Esquimalt Council made this declaration in March of 2019, as have most other CRD municipalities. Within this declaration, Council resolved to collaborate with the CRD and others to work towards achieving carbon neutrality within the region by 2030. In addition, they resolved to implement a climate action plan and climate adaptation plan as quickly as possible.

In order to receive assistance with the process of taking climate action, the Township has joined the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) program Partners for Climate Protection (PCP). This program helps municipalities with climate action by providing a five milestone framework to follow, example requests for proposals, technical resources and funding opportunities. The five PCP milestones are:

- Milestone 1. Create a GHG inventory and forecast
- Milestone 2. Set an emissions reduction target
- Milestone 3. Develop a local action plan
- Milestone 4. Implement the plan
- Milestone 5. Monitor progress and report results

The Township has already achieved Milestone 2 for its community climate actions and Milestone 1 for corporate planning. In order to achieve Milestone 3, the Township will need to set a corporate emissions reduction target and develop corporate and community climate mitigation plans.

Council has allocated resources for the preparation of a Climate Action Plan in the 2019 budget. Staff have prepared a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Climate Action Planning Project for the

Committee's consideration (Appendix B). The TOR provides project objectives, approach, scope of work, responsibilities, timelines, etc. for delivery of a Climate Mitigation Plan for the community and a Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan for municipal operations. Together with the results of the 'Together for Climate' adaptation planning project, these documents will form the 'Esquimalt Climate Action Plan' (see graphic in Appendix C). In order to finalize the TOR and proceed with the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, staff would like direction from the Committee. Once the TOR is finalized, staff will immediately begin the preparation of an RFP for consulting services for assistance with the Climate Action Planning Project.

Referral to the Environmental Advisory Committee

Both the Climate Action Progress Report and the Terms of Reference were discussed at the EAC meeting on September 26. The EAC passed the following motion:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that Council adopt the Township of Esquimalt Climate Action Project Terms of Reference as presented to the Committee at its September 26, 2019 meeting. Carried unanimously.

Other comments made by committee members included the importance of including natural environment and waste reduction strategies as well as the involvement of youth in the preparation of the plan.

ISSUES:

Terms of Reference Process and Principles

The proposed approach to climate planning for the Township, is outlined in the attached terms of reference and graphic. Highlights include:

- The plan will address both corporate and community climate actions.
- The process includes multiple opportunities for public engagement and education.
- The consultant will update both the energy audit of municipal facilities as well as the existing community level GHG inventory.
- The community GHG inventory would follow established protocols for GHG accounting.
- The plan will incorporate both climate mitigation and climate adaptation, using a Low Carbon Resilience approach.
- The plan will enable the Township to achieve Milestone Three for both corporate climate action and community climate action.

The consultant will be responsible for updating the Community Energy and Emissions inventory (CEEI), including the baseline and business as usual (BAU) forecast. The CEEI data provided by the province has not been updated since 2012 and has not included transportation data since 2010. In theory, a community inventory should measure all emissions (direct and indirect) generated by activities within the territorial boundary of the local government. In practice however, this is extremely difficult. GHGs include multiple gasses that would be difficult to quantify with limited resources. However, there is a minimum reporting standard that staff proposes to follow: the Global Protocol for Community-scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC) now recommended by FCM.

The proposal also includes an energy audit of municipal facilities. This is additional work to that referenced in the motion passed by Council; however, this report will be crucial to determining actions

to reduce corporate energy use. It is also a Strategic Plan initiative (Evaluate all public buildings for potential energy efficiencies). The last energy audit of buildings in the municipality was in 2010 under funding from BC Hydro and the upgrades were completed at that time. The energy audit would inform the Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) which will guide the organization to achieving significant reductions in carbon emissions.

The low carbon resilience (LCR) approach strategically combines climate adaptation and emissions reduction and can enhance the effectiveness of both strategies. This methodology can help avoid some of the potential risks associated with the siloed approach to climate planning. For example, in response to global heating, an action to install air conditioning in all future units could drastically increase the energy consumption of a community. An LCR approach would look at alternatives such as air flow, green roofs, urban forest cover or decreasing impermeable surfaces as strategies to combat overheating. Many of these methods have additional co-benefits such as decreased costs, less vulnerability, increased biodiversity, stormwater retention, esthetics, etc. The Township partnership with ICLEI on the Together for Climate project will produce a list of prioritized actions for climate adaptation that will be incorporated using a LCR lens into the final climate action plan.

Setting a Target for GHG Reductions from the Corporation

The Township currently does not have a target or an action plan for reducing operational emissions from corporate activities. Although these GHG emissions are low in comparison to community emissions, it is important that the community see leadership from their municipality in taking climate action and the municipality has the ability to demonstrate many projects to the broader audience. Setting of a target is necessary to achieve Milestone 2 of the PCP framework and will guide the planning process. The IPCC recommended target for GHG reduction is to reduce by 45% by 2030, from 2010 levels and staff therefore recommends this target be endorsed.

Esquimalt as a 100% Renewable Energy Community

The current target for 2050 in the OCP is to achieve carbon neutrality (although the climate emergency declarations states that an effort would be made to achieve this by 2030, the IPCC is not making this recommendation). Carbon neutrality can be achieved by two different methods. The first (and most typical) is carbon offsetting, which means to make up for emissions in one location by sequestering or preventing the emissions in carbon elsewhere. The second method is to simply eliminate carbon emissions altogether through the use of renewable energy that does not produce carbon emissions at all.

Several local municipalities have already achieved carbon neutrality for their organizational emissions through the offsetting process. Carbon offsets are purchased for \$25-30 tonne and used to balance the existing carbon emissions of the municipality. However, offsetting can be controversial because it does not provide a clear target for reducing emissions in the first place, and the benefits of some of the offsetting projects are questionable. Finally, the offsets usually take place in another community, foregoing any potential co-benefits locally. Therefore, staff are not recommending the use of offsets to achieve carbon neutrality.

Other municipalities are proposing to use the second method, which is to achieve zero carbon by aiming for 100% renewable energy. These cities have renewed their climate targets to incorporate a specific target to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050 for both corporation and community. The

BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA) presented to Esquimalt Council promoting 100% RE in September of 2017. Victoria, Saanich, and Vancouver are three example cities that have adopted this target. Staff recommends that the Committee consider endorsing the concept of Esquimalt as a 100% renewable energy community to give a clear objective for climate action planning.

Staff are seeking further direction from the Committee on:

- The proposed principles and process for the climate planning project as outlined in the 'Terms of Reference for the Esquimalt Climate Action Planning Project';
- The proposed target for corporate GHG reductions of 45% from 2010 levels by 2030; and,
- The proposed commitment to Esquimalt as a 100% renewable community by 2050.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That the COTW receive Staff Report No. DEV-19-055 for information, provide additional direction to staff as the COTW considers advisable, and direct staff to prepare an RFP for the Climate Action Planning Project as outlined in the Terms of Reference (Appendix B);
That the COTW recommends that Council endorse the proposed target to reduce corporate emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 as recommended by the IPCC in order to immediately achieve Milestone 2 of the Partner's for Climate Protection's Five Milestone Framework; and
That the COTW recommends that Council commit to Esquimalt becoming a 100% renewable energy community by 2050.
2. That the COTW provide alternative direction to staff.
3. That the COTW request further information from staff.