

Report to Council



Date: May 31, 2021

To: Council

From: City Manager

Subject: Scope of the Climate and Environment Review

Department: Planning and Development Services Division

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Planning and Development Services Division dated May 31, 2021, with respect to a Project Plan for the Climate and Environment Review.

Purpose:

To introduce Council to the Champion of the Environment position and the work that is proposed for the Climate and Environment Review.

Background:

One of the six focus areas of Council's 2019-2022 priorities is Environmental Protection, which includes four results:

1. Community and corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are decreasing;
2. Neighbourhoods and city infrastructure are resilient and adaptable to climate change;
3. Predictive modelling and forecasting is improving; and
4. The City's response to extreme weather events minimizes disruption to delivering regular operations.¹

In 2020, Council was provided a report on the progress the City is making on each of Council's six priority areas (May 25, 2020 PM Council Session, item 5.8).² This report indicated that three of the four Environmental Protection results (numbers 2-4 above) were trending in the right direction; however, "community and corporate GHG emissions are decreasing" was not trending in the right direction. As

¹ City of Kelowna (COK). 2019. Council Priorities 2019-2022. Retrieved from: https://www.kelowna.ca/sites/files/1/docs/council_priorities_2019-2022_summary.pdf.

² COK. 2020. May 25, 2020 PM Council Session, Item 5.8. Retrieved from: <https://kelownapublishing.escibemeetings.com/Meeting?Id=02e474dc-9345-4f03-aba8-f83436fade95&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

Council recently heard as part of the “Reporting Progress on Council Priorities report” (March 15, 2021 PM Council Session, item 5.1),³ the most recent data from 2017 suggests that trend has continued.

On the community side, despite steady progress on implementing the 2018 Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP)⁴ (e.g., Over 78 per cent of the 47 actions are in progress, ongoing or complete), the most recent data for community GHG emissions from 2017 showed a 5.9 per cent increase compared to the 2007 baseline year. While variations in GHG emissions are noted from year-to-year due to various factors (e.g., weather – cold years will use more natural gas or electricity for heating; pandemic restrictions will reduce vehicle travel and fuel use), it is concerning that the community is trending away from our targets.⁵

On the corporate side, the Corporate Energy and GHG Emissions Plan indicated that while the City saw a 17 per cent increase in population growth from 2007 to 2017, the City mitigated an increase to its corporate energy usage resulting from this growth, and reduced annual corporate GHG emissions 7 per cent below 2007 levels.⁶ Since that time, staff have uncovered some errors in the billing data, indicating that the data recorded since 2017 may not be accurate. Staff are currently reviewing current and historical data related to all City accounts and will be able to more accurately report on how the City is trending as a corporation later this year.

The other three results that address Council’s Environmental Protection Priority focus on forecasting, modelling and adapting so the community will be resilient to climate change. Each of the Environmental Protection priority results relate to adaptation are trending in the right direction as various departments undertake initiatives to prepare our community. However, the City does not yet have a Climate Adaptation Plan to provide comprehensive direction to prepare the community for the anticipated changes (e.g., increased frequency of wildfires, flooding, and hot days). Further, some of the existing set of performance criteria for Council’s environmental priorities related to climate adaptation are difficult to measure and will require additional review and improvement as our ability to measure/monitor improves.

It is also recognized that all the Council priorities related to environmental protection focus on climate mitigation (reducing GHG emissions) and adaptation (preparing for the impacts of climate change). To have a more robust understanding of the state of the environment in Kelowna and the City’s progress on protecting the natural environment, issues beyond climate change must be considered (e.g., biodiversity, habitat loss, water resources, and air quality). The City needs to have a clear vision at the corporate level to ensure coordinated progress related to climate and the environment (C&E). This approach will also help staff maintain alignment with our Imagine Kelowna community vision, which includes the principle of being a Responsible community, through four environmental protection related goals.

³ COK. 2021. Mar. 15, 2021 PM Council Session, Item 5.1. Retrieved from: <https://kelownapublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting?Id=7d93fobo-a79a-45b6-94e4-652011bd2b85&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=40>.

⁴ COK. 2018. Our Kelowna as We Take Action: Kelowna’s Community Climate Action Plan. Retrieved from: https://www.kelowna.ca/sites/files/1/docs/community/community_climate_action_plan_june_2018_final.pdf.

⁵ COK has the following GHG emissions reduction targets relative to the 2007 baseline year: 4 per cent by 2023; 25 per cent by 2033; and 80 per cent by 2050.

⁶ COK. 2018. Corporate Energy and GHG Emissions Plan. Retrieved from: https://www.kelowna.ca/sites/files/1/docs/community/corporate_energy_and_ghg_emissions_plan_2018.pdf

Recognizing some of these gaps, in October 2020, Council supported staff recommendations to implement a series of initiatives to accelerate climate action in 2021 (October 19, 2020 PM Council Session, item 5.3).⁷ To further support C&E progress, at the 2021 Budget Deliberations, Council also supported the hiring of the two-year term Champion of the Environment (COE) position starting in 2021 to **lead a comprehensive review of the City's C&E related policies, programs, actions, resource, and systems, and complete a report with a series of recommendations for improvements and coordination. The COE will also provide expert advice, guidance, and support to existing C&E related initiatives to support Council's Environmental Protection priority in the short-term.**

Discussion:

The COE commenced work on April 5, 2021 and has been working with the Director of Planning and Development Services and the City Manager to create a Project Plan summarizing the COE's work over the next two years.

Key Components of the Climate and Environment Review are summarized below.

Objectives

The main objectives of the project are the following:

- Establish, through staff and community engagement, a corporate vision, key priorities, and objectives related to C&E.
- Determine the effectiveness of the City's current C&E related policies, programs, resources, actions, and systems relative to the established corporate C&E vision, priorities, and objectives.
- Determine the gaps of the City's current C&E related policies, programs, resources, actions, and systems relative to the established corporate C&E vision, priorities, and objectives.
- Provide a series of recommendations to advance the corporate vision, priorities, and objectives related to C&E.

Project Benefits

There is corporate recognition that improvements can be made for the C&E portfolio at the City to advance the applicable Council Priorities and Imagine Kelowna goals. Therefore, the main benefit of the review will be to generate progress on these community and Council priorities and goals. The review will also:

- Provide clarity (at both a corporate and community level) on the City's overarching long-term direction for C&E.
- Enable community leaders and local decision-makers to better understand the challenges and opportunities to take more significant steps forward in the areas of C&E.
- Identify an efficient path/plan to ensure ongoing corporate progress in the areas of C&E.

⁷ COK. 2020. October 19, 2020 PM Council Session, Item 5.3. Retrieved from: <https://kelownapublishing.escrimemeetings.com/Meeting?Id=gdf5543b-92e4-4260-bof1-4b239e4fc3a8&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=24>

Project Team

The review will be led by the Champion of the Environment with support and oversight from the Divisional Director of Planning & Development Services and the City Manager.

One of the key components of the review is a comprehensive multi-stakeholder review. This will include facilitated staff/community engagement activities and reporting related to key findings.

This review will include several touch points with Council, and engagement with many internal City staff and external community stakeholders.

Project Scope and Plan

The review includes identifying gaps and developing recommendations for improvement for the following:

- Aspects of the City's corporate and community operations that have a clear link to Climate/Environment.
- Climate/Environmental aspects within the City of Kelowna geographic or authoritative boundaries.
- Recommendations to groups outside of direct City control, but who impact the City's progress on climate and environment objectives (e.g., other levels of government).

The scope of this project includes the key phases presented in Figure 1.

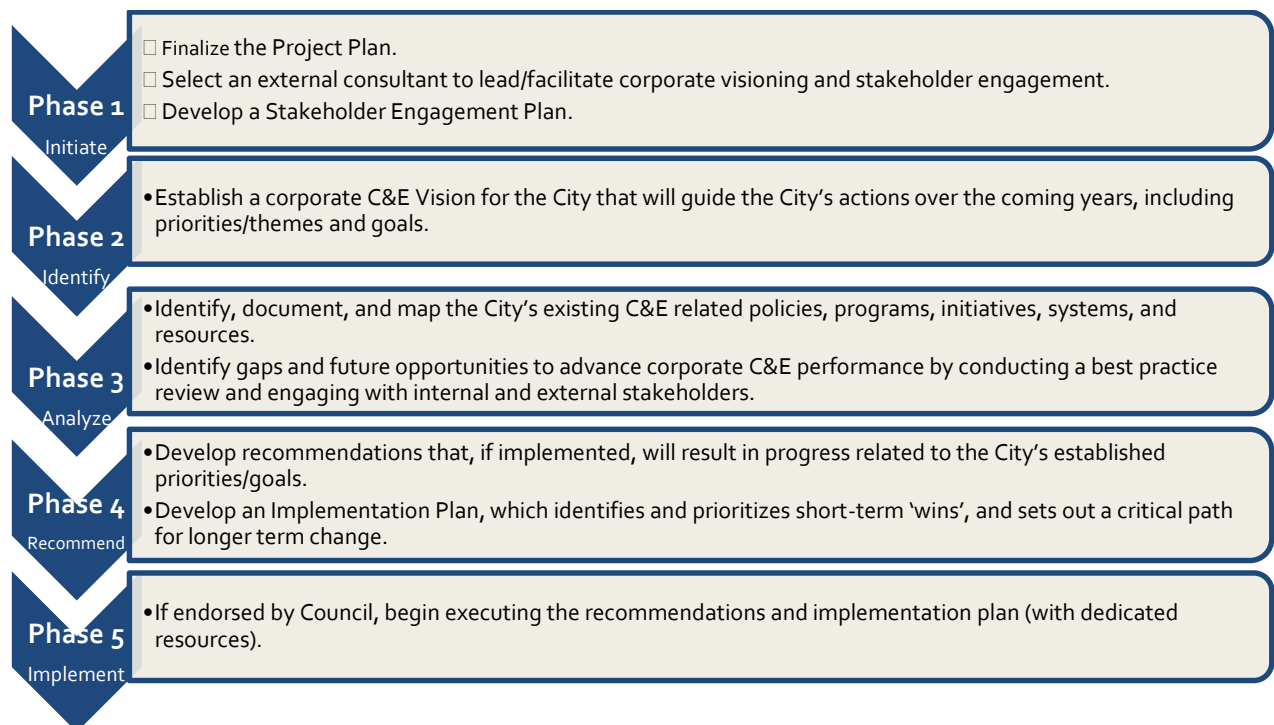


Figure 1: Project Phases

Deliverables

The main deliverable of the project is a report outlining recommendations to take more significant steps forward in the areas of Climate and Environment (expected Q3 2022). Other interim deliverables may include:

- Stakeholder Engagement Plan: Q3 2021
- Summary of Corporate Visioning (Climate and Environment Framework/Charter): Q4 2021
- Report to Council – Summary of C&E Corporate Visioning: Q4 2021
- Report to Council - Summary of Stakeholder Engagement: Q2 2022
- Recommendations Report & Implementation Plan: Q3 2022
- Recommendations and Implementation Plan Report to Council: Q3 2022

Conclusion and Next Steps:

Climate action and environmental protection are priorities and values of Council and Kelowna residents, as expressed through Imagine Kelowna. While the City has made some progress in these areas, there is recognition that a more coordinated effort is needed. The Climate & Environment Review by the Champion of the Environment will assist with these efforts by establishing an organizational vision/direction; determining the gaps of the current policies, programs, actions, resources, and systems; and providing recommendations for improvement. It is anticipated that the project will result in a roadmap that will guide the City's climate and environment efforts in a coordinated, measurable, and impactful way.

Next steps are to engage a consultant to lead/facilitate internal and external community engagement and finalize a stakeholder engagement plan. The Champion of the Environment will also begin a Best Practice Review of other local governments and review current C&E policies, programs, actions, and systems to identify gaps.

Internal Circulation:

- Communications
- Development Planning
- Infrastructure Engineering
- Infrastructure Operations
- Integrated Transportation
- Policy & Planning
- Purchasing
- Real Estate (Parking Services)
- Utility Services

Existing Policy:

The project and COE are directly related to the Council priority of Environmental Protection, which includes the following results statements:

- Community and corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are decreasing;
- Neighbourhoods and city infrastructure are resilient and adaptable to climate change;
- Predictive modelling and forecasting is improving; and
- The City's response to extreme weather events minimizes disruption to delivering regular operations.

The project will also help achieve the Imagine Kelowna vision for Kelowna to be collaborative, smarter, responsible, and connected. In particular, the project and COE will advance multiple goals identified by the community through Imagine Kelowna:

- Protect land, water & air
- Protect agricultural land
- Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource
- Take action in the face of climate change⁸

Submitted by:

C. Ray, Champion of the Environment

Approved for inclusion:



Ryan Smith, Director of Planning & Development Services

⁸ City of Kelowna. 2018. Imagine Kelowna: the Visions to 2040. Retrieved from: https://www.kelowna.ca/sites/files/1/docs/related/imagine_kelowna_short_report_digital.pdf.