

Report to Council



Date: August 8, 2022

To: Council

From: City Manager

Subject: Climate & Environment Review: Framework and Recommendations Report

Department: Planning & Development Services

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive, for information, the staff report on the Climate and Environment Review, dated August 8, 2022;

AND THAT Council endorse the Framework and recommended initiatives outlined in the *Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report*;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct the City Manager to work with staff in bringing Recommendations and priority Quick Starts into the 2023 budget process.

Purpose:

To present the Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report to Council for information and endorsement.

Background:

The City of Kelowna (the City) recognizes its role in addressing the climate crisis and protecting our natural areas. Currently there are many City-led initiatives dedicated towards climate action and environmental stewardship (C&E), and in many cases, the City has demonstrated leadership. Despite this, there are gaps from where the City wants to go and where it is at. For example, despite steady progress on implementing the 2018 Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP), the most recent data for community GHG emissions from 2018 showed a 3.8 per cent increase compared to the 2007 baseline year. While this can partially be credited to rapid community growth, GHG emissions are not decreasing at the level needed to reach climate mitigation targets. Moreover, as local governments take a more active role in climate adaptation efforts, the City needs to establish foundational strategies that will define its approach moving forward.

As part of the City's desire for continual improvement, at the 2021 Budget Deliberations, Council supported the hiring of the two-year term Champion of the Environment position starting in 2021 to lead a comprehensive review of the City's C&E related policies, programs, actions, resource, and

systems, and provide a series of recommendations for improvements. Over the past year, the Champion of the Environment completed this review with the following key objectives:

1. Establish a Framework for the City that will define and guide C&E focal points over the coming years, including priorities/themes and goals.
2. Identify current gaps and future opportunities to advance corporate C&E performance.
3. Develop a series of practical recommendations/solutions that, if implemented, will result in tangible progress related to the City's C&E objectives.

This report summarizes (1) a recommended Climate Resilience Framework (the Framework) to define priorities and guide action at the City; and (2) a series of recommendations to advance C&E in the coming years. The full *Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report* is provided in Attachment 1.

Discussion:

Climate Resilience Framework

Staff developed the Framework to define and guide C&E efforts at the City. The Framework was presented to Council in draft form at the December 6, 2021 PM Council Session (for information only), and since then minor changes were made based on staff and stakeholder feedback.

The Framework is intended to be the City's roadmap to achieving the C&E elements of the Imagine Kelowna community vision. It provides a clear structure on the pathways forward ensuring City staff, Council, partners, stakeholders, and residents all have a common starting place for collaboration. It is organized around **five priority pathways**, each with five desired results (i.e., the 'end-states' that must be met to advance each priority), that collectively help mobilize the Imagine Kelowna vision:

- **Demonstrate corporate climate leadership:** This pathway is focused on setting an example regarding C&E through the City's own operations. This involves embedding climate resilience into decision making across the organization, practicing environmentally sustainable procurement, reducing GHG emissions in the corporate fleet and City facilities, and being an active and trusted resource for climate action for others in the community.
- **Reduce community GHG emissions:** This pathway is centered on reducing community sources of GHG emissions to curb climate change. Successful low emission development in Kelowna means promoting sustainable transportation through effective land use and alternative transportation modes, supporting the shift to ZEVs, decarbonizing buildings, and shifting to renewable energy sources.
- **Adapt to a changing climate:** Even with aggressive emissions reduction at a local and global level, the climate has changed and will continue to over the coming decades. Therefore, the community must be prepared for and be resilient to local climate impacts that are increasing in frequency and magnitude, such as droughts, flooding, wildfires, extreme heat, and invasive species.
- **Protect natural areas:** Kelowna's foundational quality is the beauty of its natural areas. People live and visit the area because of Okanagan Lake and other water resources, the forests, the mountains, and the local biodiversity. These natural assets are invaluable from an

environmental, social, and economic perspective, and therefore need to be protected, enhanced, and restored in the face of climate change and development pressures.

- **Shift to a circular economy:** If the City is going to deliver on its C&E objectives in a period of growth, transitioning from a “take-make-waste” linear system to a circular economy will be vital. This can be accomplished by shifting to a sustainable local food system, reducing the embodied carbon of the built environment, reducing waste and diverting it from the landfill, recovering resources from waste, and moving to a sharing economy.

The Framework also outlines **five principles**, informed by existing corporate values, best practice research and staff engagement, that form the key values behind the vision:

- Recognize the value of local syilx Indigenous Knowledge
- Consider Social Equity in decision-making and implementation
- Prioritize initiatives with “triple-bottom-line” benefits
- Prioritize initiatives with co-benefits between Pathways
- Balance short-term savings with costs of inaction

The full Framework is presented in Part 2 of the *Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report* (Attachment 1).

Recommendations

The key objective of the review was to establish a set of recommendations that outline priority opportunities and “Quick Starts” to advance the Framework in the short-term. The recommendations are structured around the five pathways of the Framework.

The recommendations and associated Quick Starts are summarized in the table below. The full recommendations are presented in Part 3 of the *Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report*.

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations and Quick Starts

| Recommendations | Quick Starts |
|--|---|
| Demonstrate Corporate Climate Leadership | |
| Apply a Climate Lens for Decision Making across the organization | Develop a climate lens decision making tool |
| | Develop an internal carbon price and to guide climate friendly purchasing |
| Reduce fleet emissions through rapid electrification of the light duty fleet | Apply an electric first purchasing policy for new light duty vehicles |
| Develop ‘green’ standards for City facilities | Develop a sustainable building policy for new City facilities |

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| Expand educational resources to help residents participate in the City's climate action and environmental stewardship efforts | Develop a Resident's Guide to Climate Action |
| Reduce GHG Emissions | |
| Prioritize efforts to decarbonize Kelowna's biggest source of emissions: Transportation | Continue to invest in transit service and active transportation infrastructure per the Transportation Master Plan |
| | Fund and implement Transportation Demand Management Initiatives |
| | Support the shift to EVs through a vast charging network |
| Adopt a low-carbon approach to Energy Step Code | Establish an Energy Step Code Adoption Schedule with low-carbon priority |
| Bring together energy and resilience into one Home Retrofit Program | Continue to design a home retrofit program through the FCM Community Efficiency Financing Program |
| | Pilot a home energy coordinator support service |
| | Direct incentives to proven low-carbon technologies (e.g., electric heat pumps) |
| Adapt to a Changing Climate | |
| Combine Climate Mitigation and Adaptation into one Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy | Complete a Community Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment |
| Develop a strategy to expand blue and green infrastructure | Explore options to incorporate climate resilience in roof space for new construction |
| Implement the proposed actions of the Community Wildfire Resilience Plan | Expand FireSmart Programs |
| Protect and Restore Natural Areas | |
| Identify and manage natural assets, species-at-risk, and critical habitat | Develop a strategy to monitor changes to sensitive ecosystems |
| | Invest in relevant datasets to give a better picture of key environmental indicators |
| | Develop a Natural Asset Management Strategy |

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| Develop a Natural Environment Strategy with City responses to regional strategies | Inventory and develop City responses to regional and provincial natural environment strategies, such as the Okanagan Region Biodiversity Strategy, Okanagan Lake Responsibility Plan, and Central Okanagan Non-Structural Flood Mitigation Resource Guide |
| Shift to a Circular Economy | |
| Focus waste diversion efforts on construction and demolition debris | Complete a Construction & Demolition Debris Reuse & Recycling Feasibility Study |
| | Explore policy for low-carbon concrete |
| In collaboration with regional partners, develop a Circular Economy Strategy | Participate in the Canadian Circular Cities and Regions Initiative Peer-to-Peer Network |

While progressive initiatives are important to advance climate and environmental priorities, to succeed in its tasks, the City needs the structures, systems, and resources in place to make decisions, oversee the delivery of services, and report on performance. Therefore, the City needs a strong governance system that provides the appropriate level of staffing resources, the appropriate staffing structure, and the appropriate budget. The City also needs to determine how best to engage with external stakeholders on C&E initiatives. Recommendations for effective governance are not provided in this report; however, in Phase 5 of the Review (Implement), the Champion of the Environment will work with the City Manager and the Senior Leadership Team to identify governance components in advancing and operationalizing the Framework and recommendations.

Conclusion:

Climate change is an unprecedented problem due to its widespread impact and inherent complexity. Adequately addressing it, therefore, does not require incremental change, but transformational change. This means taking a broader more systemic look at the City’s approach to climate action and environmental stewardship and considering the implementation of fundamentally different approaches. The proposed Framework and recommendations serve as a starting point to the transformational change that is needed.

If Council endorses the recommendations, next steps are to incorporate priority Quick Start initiatives through the 2023 Budget Process and begin implementation of key initiatives with associated resourcing requests.

Internal Circulation:

- Planning & Development Services
- Infrastructure
- Financial Services
- Corporate Strategic Services
- Partnerships & investments

Existing Policy:

- Council Priorities 2019-2022:
 - Environmental Protection
 - Community and corporate 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
- Imagine Kelowna goals:
 - Protect land, water & air
 - Protect agricultural land
 - Preserve Okanagan Lake as a shared resource
 - Take action in the face of climate change
- 2040 OCP Pillars:
 - Take action on climate
 - Protect and restore our environment

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

This Council Report does not have any direct implications on the financial plan. However, each recommended Quick Start has an estimated cost. If Council is to endorse the Recommendations and associated Quick Starts, it is recommended that Council direct the City Manager to work with staff in bringing priority Quick Starts into the 2023 budget process with associated resource requests. The Quick Starts and estimated costs are in Appendix B of the *Climate Resilience & Environmental Stewardship Review: Framework and Recommendations Report (Attachment 1)*.

Submitted by:

C. Ray, Champion of the Environment

Approved for inclusion:



Ryan Smith, Director of Planning & Development Services