



CLIMATE RESILIENT KELOWNA STRATEGY

Phase 2 Engagement Summary | July 2024

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PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

To inform citizens and invested organizations about the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy and to seek input on key priorities and actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and prepare for and adapt to a changing climate.



We would like to acknowledge that engagement took place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the syilx/Okanagan people.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Predicted climate change is already happening in Kelowna – hotter, drier summers; intense weather; and more precipitation in all seasons except Summer is becoming the norm. These changes in climate will impact Kelowna’s citizens, ecosystems, agriculture, infrastructure, and the economy.

To meet the City’s community GHG emissions reduction targets and better adapt to a changing climate, the City began a three-phase project in 2021 to develop a new community climate action plan – the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy (CRKS).

Technical analysis, research, and engagement with Kelowna residents and various interest holders will help gain insights for and to help inform the new CRKS. The CRKS provides direction to help reduce community GHG emissions (mitigation) while preparing for the impacts of climate change (adaptation).

This low-emission resilience approach is essential for addressing the challenges posed by a changing climate and ensuring the long-term sustainability of ecosystems, economies, and society, while maximizing efficiencies and other co-benefits of action.



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Phase 1 of community engagement occurred in 2022 and 2023, with the main purpose of informing citizens and invested organizations about the CRKS and to seek input on key priorities and actions to reduce GHG emissions and prepare for and adapt to a changing climate.

The summary for Phase 1 of public engagement was presented to Council in January of 2024 along with an update on CRKS progress.

Phase 2 of public engagement occurred in the Spring of 2024 with the primary purpose of giving the community an opportunity to review the draft CRKS, gauging level of support for the key drivers and strategies and understanding some of the community’s priorities. This document summarizes Phase 2 of public engagement.

To ensure the CRKS captured lived experiences with climate change, concerns for vulnerability and risks, and reflected the community’s willingness to take action to help mitigate and adapt to climate change, a robust engagement plan was created to gain feedback from residents and key interest holders. Additional efforts were used to encourage participation from those most affected by climate change (seniors, folks with low-income and those who use social services.) A Youth Working Group comprised of nine students from eight different schools was created as youth are the

future of decision-making. An Invested Organizations Working Group comprised of representatives from 16 organizations within Kelowna who impact or are impacted by climate change were also engaged throughout the development of the CRKS.

The online survey focused on ranking and prioritization of the 10 Key Drivers within the draft strategy; it also included a section on the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy (SUFFS) considering tree canopy is often related to climate mitigation and timing of the two projects aligned.

To give the opportunity for residents to ask questions, learn more and interact with City of Kelowna staff, two open houses were hosted in May/June in central and downtown neighbourhoods. Informational boards were created to highlight key elements of the draft CRKS and determine if participants supported community climate priorities.

More information on the results of the two working groups can be found later in the summary.





PROMOTION

This was a city-wide engagement, so a variety of broad tactics were used to reach residents.

Climate change can more adversely affect certain under-represented demographics (lower-income, seniors etc.), direct outreach via personal email invitations were used to ensure those groups had the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft strategy.

A news release was launched at the beginning of the survey and was picked up by a variety of outlets including Kelowna Capital News and Kelowna Now. An interview with the City's Climate Action & Environment Manager was also conducted on CBC's Daybreak South to discuss the CRKS engagement. Digital ads were created on Instagram, Facebook and Google with a combined reach of more than 200,000 and 2,000 clicks back to the project page.

Banners were placed on Castanet throughout the campaign and to reach those who may not be online, ads in the Daily Courier were used to advertise both the online survey and open house opportunities.

While the percentage of people who completed the survey was 15 per cent of the total page views, the 5,320 page views can be considered part of the "engaged population" as they were informed and educated about the draft survey via the page.



5,320
page views



351
survey completions



SURVEY RESULTS

Results from open surveys such as this are a collection of opinions and perceptions from interested or potentially affected residents – those with an existing affinity for the topic - and not a statistically random sample of all Kelowna residents.

Hosted on the City's Get Involved platform, 351 participants completed the survey between May 15 and June 9, 2024. The results were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop a thematic analysis.

Support for Key Drivers

The strategy outlines 10 key drivers of change that will guide the City towards lowering emissions by 40 per cent from 2007 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero emissions by 2050. To achieve these drivers, the strategy proposes 28 strategies and 138 actions that the City can implement to foster a low-emission resilient community (note: the final strategy after engagement has 27 strategies and 155 actions).

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the strategies to achieve the 10 Key Drivers to determine if the Draft Plan meets the needs of the community. Below are the 10 key drivers and 28 strategies provided to survey respondents in the survey.

KEY DRIVERS AND STRATEGIES

1



Reduce reliance on vehicles

- Create fast and reliable transit
- Create safe, comfortable walking and bicycling routes
- Expand shared mobility options
- Reduce distance driven by vehicles

2



Transition to efficient, low-emission vehicles

- Increase access to EV charging on private property
- Expand the public EV charging network
- Support the transition to efficient and zero-emission commercial vehicles and goods movement
- Support more fuel-efficient, lower emission driving

3



Create low-emission, efficient, resilient buildings

- Support retrofits to create more efficient, low-emission, resilient residential buildings
- Support retrofits to create more efficient, low-emission, resilient non-residential buildings
- Accelerate adoption of low-emission, efficient new buildings
- Increase the resilience of new construction to local climate hazards

4



Support low-emission and resilient energy supply

- Support the transition to a low-emission energy supply
- Advocate for increased resilience of the local energy supply

5



Create complete, compact, resilient communities

- Target growth in climate resilient Urban Centres and Core Areas
- Integrate GHG emissions reduction and resilience in land-use planning regulation and development policies
- Apply a climate lens to development

6



Employ nature-based solutions

- Protect and restore natural systems providing ecosystem services to reduce climate hazard risk
- Utilize green infrastructure to improve climate resilience
- Inventory, assess and monitor ecosystems and green infrastructure

7



Reduce emissions from waste

- Reduce waste generation and increase waste diversion

8



Increase the resiliency of infrastructure and assets

- Infrastructure is upgraded or adapted to withstand the impacts of a changing climate

9



Improve climate emergency preparedness

- Enhance climate emergency response planning
- Empower the community to be prepared for climate emergencies

10



Demonstrate municipal corporate climate leadership

- Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in climate action initiatives
- Incorporate a climate lens into municipal governance and operations
- Decarbonize City assets and operations
- Empower the community to take climate action

The most strongly supported strategies across all ten key drivers according to respondents are **protect and restore natural systems providing ecosystem services to reduce climate hazard risk** (65 per cent, 225), **comfortable walking and bicycling routes** (61 per cent, 211) and **reduce waste generation and increase waste diversion** (60 per cent, 208).

54% of respondents believed there were other key drivers or strategies that should be considered in the CRKS.

Other strongly supported strategies included:

- support the transition to efficient and zero-emission commercial vehicles and goods movement
39 per cent, 137
- increase the resilience of new construction to local climate hazards
56 per cent, 190
- support the transition to a low-carbon energy supply (e.g. remove barriers to renewable energy adoption, encourage low carbon energy sources, etc.)
46 per cent, 161
- apply a climate lens to development
50 per cent, 172
- infrastructure is upgrade or adapted to withstand the impacts of a changing environment
45 per cent, 157
- empower the community to be prepared for climate emergencies
49 per cent, 173
- incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Action initiatives
47 per cent, 163

When asked if there were other key drivers or strategies that should be considered in the CRKS, the following themes emerged:

- A tree protection bylaw for trees on private property to preserve the urban forest and reduce carbon emissions.
- The promotion of low-carbon mobility options such as public transit, biking, walking, and electric vehicles were mentioned and included suggestions like expanding and enhancing the transit system, creating more bike lanes and trails and providing incentives for electric vehicle adoption.
- Preserving and increasing green spaces and biodiversity in the city, especially in urban areas. Respondents proposed more parks, community gardens, native plants and wildlife corridors to enhance the natural environment and its resilience.
- Water conservation and management, suggesting measures such as drought-resistant landscaping, water restrictions and rainwater harvesting.

THREE MOST SUPPORTED STRATEGIES ACROSS ALL 10 KEY DRIVERS:



Protect and restore natural systems providing ecosystem services to reduce climate hazard risk

65 per cent, 225



Create comfortable walking and bicycling routes

61 per cent, 211



Reduce waste generation and increase waste diversion

60 per cent, 208

Respondents were also asked to provide any additional feedback on the draft plan to ensure it meets the needs of the community.

- Despite the overwhelming support for climate action, some comments expressed skepticism or opposition to the climate action plan, questioning the scientific evidence of human-caused climate change, the effectiveness of local actions and the costs and benefits of the proposed strategies.
 - However, many respondents emphasized the need to educate residents on the causes and impacts of climate change and how to take individual and collective actions to mitigate and adapt to it.
- Mentions of recommendations for reducing emissions and increasing resilience to climate impacts. Some of the suggestions are improving public transit, bike lanes, and sidewalks, creating methods to track and rank emission reduction targets and priorities, providing composting pickup and bins for residents, restoring riparian areas and urban forests with native vegetation and expanding solar panels and water conservation.

Personal actions

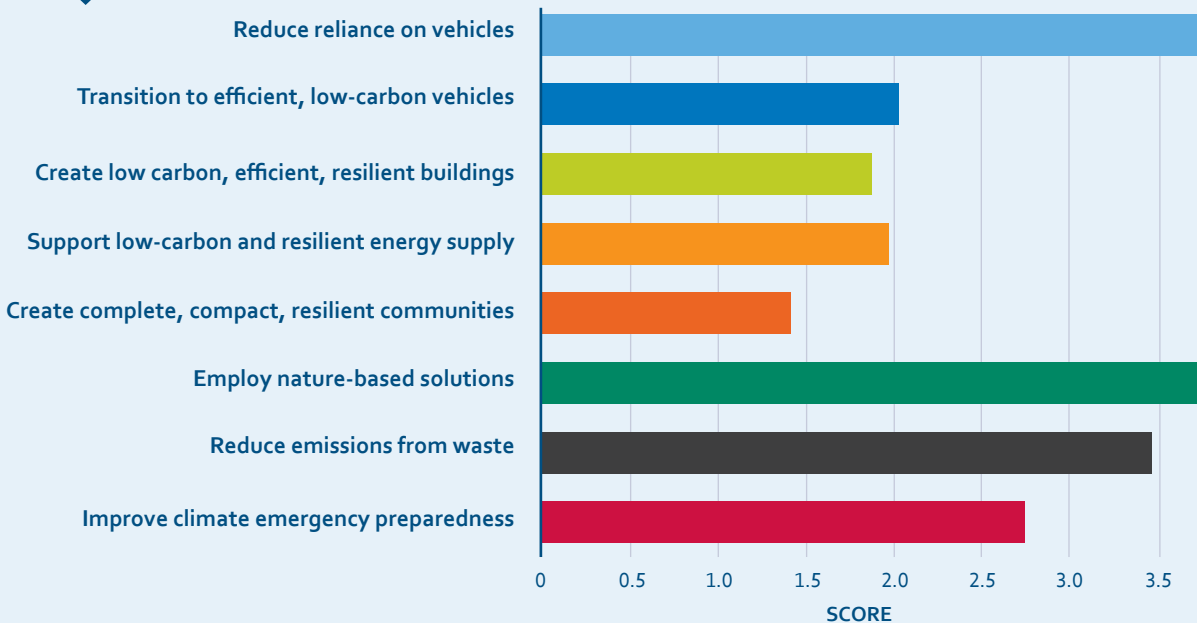
Understanding that meeting the City’s community climate action objectives is largely contingent on behaviour change at the household level, participants were asked to outline climate actions they could take in their own lives to help advance the objectives of the CRKS.

Employing nature-based solutions, reducing reliance on vehicles, and reducing emissions from waste were the top actions participants indicated they could take to address climate change over the next five years.

The least likely actions participants selected were to “create complete, compact, resilient communities” and “create low carbon, efficient, resilient buildings”. This could be because these two actions are of a larger scale (e.g., appear to rely more on City policy and planning than personal action) and may seem more daunting to complete to respondents.



RANKING PERSONAL ACTIONS TO ADVANCE CRKS OBJECTIVES





WORKING GROUP RESULTS

Two Working Groups, one of invested organizations and a second of youth representatives, were engaged in the development of the CRKS with the purpose of providing input on the CRKS goals, strategies, priorities and actions, and community engagement activities. The Working Groups purpose was to:

- Ensure diverse voices and perspectives are brought together to shape the CRKS;
- Engage community members who can assist the project team in connecting with and hearing from residents and groups who may have barriers or challenges to participating in public engagement opportunities;
- Provide a sounding board on the clarity and content of materials being developed for public engagement in the project;
- Provide input on issues and opportunities to reduce community GHG emissions related to land use, transportation, buildings, solid waste, and other local sources;
- Provide input on ways the City can plan, prepare for, respond to, and reduce the risk from climate change impacts; and
- Inspire community solutions and action.

The two Working Groups met separately, so that we could create a comfortable environment where the Youth could feel their ideas and comments would feel heard.

For this round of engagement, the Invested Organizations Working Group (15 participants) met on May 23, 2024. The Youth Working Group, comprised of nine participants ranging from grade 6 to undergraduate post-secondary students, met on June 17, 2024. The purpose of both sessions was to get feedback on the draft strategy.

Some takeaways from the invested organizations group included the need for collective action, support from local industries, and continuous engagement with youth and Indigenous groups.

Some areas emphasized by the Youth Working Group were the importance of being able to get around Kelowna without a vehicle, implementing green roofs and spaces, solar energy and incentives for composting.

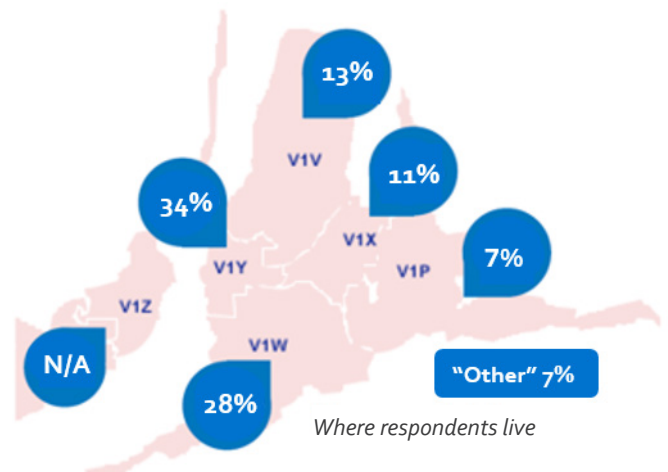


SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Central Okanagan from South Pandosy to the Landmark area represented the largest portion of the survey respondents, which aligns with it being the largest population of Kelowna. V1W was a close second with respondents from South Kelowna and the Lower Mission.

The largest age group to participate was 46-69 at 45 per cent with 38 per cent reporting a household income greater than \$100,000, aligning with the average demographics of Kelowna as per Statistics Canada.

However, under-represented groups and individuals remain under-represented in the overall results. 17 per cent of respondents identified themselves as 70+ years of age and only 9 per cent have a household income of less than \$40,000.



NEXT STEPS

All feedback received during the second round of engagement will inform the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy which will be presented to Council for endorsement.



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