

Report to Council



Date: October 21, 2024
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: TA24-0016: Updating the Official Community Plan’s Tree Canopy and GHG Targets
Department: Long Range Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Official Community Plan Text Amendment Application No. TA24-0016 to amend Kelowna 2040 – Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 12300 as outlined in Schedule “A” attached to the Report from the Long Range Planning Department dated October 21, 2024, be considered by Council;

AND THAT the Official Community Plan Text Amendment Bylaw be forwarded to Public Hearing for further consideration;

AND FURTHER THAT Council considers the public process outlined in the report from Long Range Planning, dated October 21, 2024, to be appropriate consultation for the purpose of Section 475 of the Local Government Act.

Purpose:

To amend the Official Community Plan by updating the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets and the tree canopy targets to be consistent with the recently adopted Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy and Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy.

Council Priority Alignment:

Climate & Environment

Background:

Previous Council Resolution

Resolution	Date
THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship, dated September 23, 2024, with respect to the 2024 Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy;	September 23, 2024

Resolution	Date
AND THAT Council adopt the 2024 Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy as attached to the report from Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship dated September 23, 2024.	
<p>THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Parks Services & Long Range Planning, dated August 26, 2024, with respect to the 2024 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy;</p> <p>AND THAT Council adopt the 2024 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy as attached to the report from Parks Services & Long Range Planning dated August 26, 2024</p>	August 26, 2024
<p>THAT Council receives for information, the report from the Policy & Planning Department dated June 20, 2022, with respect to Climate Modelling: GHG Reduction Targets and Next Steps for Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy;</p> <p>AND THAT Council direct staff to update the 2040 OCP with new GHG reduction targets as outlined in the report;</p> <p>AND THAT Council direct staff to use these new GHG reduction targets as a basis for developing a Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy;</p>	June 20, 2022

Discussion:

On August 26, 2024, Council adopted the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy that has a vision of expanding Kelowna's urban forest to improve livability and help the community mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. On September 23, 2024, Council also adopted the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy which takes a low-emission resilience approach to addressing climate change.

Both strategies recommend new targets to replace targets in the 2040 Official Community Plan. The Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy recommends updating OCP Policy 14.2.2 Kelowna's Tree Canopy Targets to separate targets by Growth Strategy District to recognize each Growth Strategy's unique challenges and opportunities for tree canopy expansion and to avoid the large size of the Rural Growth Strategy District obscuring progress in other districts. It also recommends extending the target timeline from 2040 to 2050 as follows:

Strengthen and expand a healthy and diverse urban forest, as per the City's Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy, with 2050 tree canopy targets of:

- 20% within the Urban Centres;
- 20% within the Core Area;
- 15% within the Gateway;
- 25% within Suburban Neighbourhoods; and
- 25% within Rural Lands.

As part of the development of the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy, modelling demonstrated a pathway for Kelowna to reduce emissions 40 per cent by 2030, which aligns with senior government emissions reduction targets. In response to this, Council directed staff to use the following targets to develop the Strategy and to subsequently update OCP Policy 12.1.1 GHG Emissions Reduction Targets as follows:

In partnership with senior governments; local citizens and businesses; non-profits; external agencies; and utility providers; work towards reducing absolute community greenhouse gas emissions:

- 40% below 2007 levels by 2030; and
- Achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Conclusion:

The Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy and Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy each identify a series of actions to put the community on the path to achieve the targets. The strategies also outline monitoring plans to track progress on the targets. Achieving the targets, however, requires collective action by all levels of government, businesses, organizations and the broader community.

Internal Circulation:

Climate Action and Environment Manager
Community Engagement Manager
Urban Forestry Supervisor

Considerations applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

BC Local Government Act Part 14, Division 4, Section 473 (3) states that "An official community plan must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets."

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

BC Local Government Act, Part 14, Division 4, Section 475 specifies that a local government must, during the development, repeal or amendment of an official community plan, provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected. This consultation is in addition to a required public hearing.

Existing Policy:

- *OCP Policy 12.1.1 GHG Emissions Reduction Targets.* In partnership with senior governments; local citizens and businesses; non-profits; external agencies; and utility providers work towards reducing absolute community greenhouse gas emissions below 2007 levels by:
 - 4% by 2023;
 - 25% by 2033; and
 - 80% by 2050.
- *OCP Policy 14.2.2 Kelowna's Tree Canopy.* Strengthen and expand a healthy and diverse urban forest, as per the City's Urban Forest Strategy, with tree canopy targets of:
 - 12% within Urban Centres;
 - 20% within the Core Area; and
 - 25% for the rest of the City (Gateway, Suburban Neighbourhoods and Rural Lands combined)

Consultation and Engagement:

Engagement on the GHG emission reduction targets and the tree canopy targets took place as part of the engagement for the development of both the Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy and the Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy. Target engagement included:

- Tree Canopy Target Engagement
 - *Fall 2022 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy Engagement:* 347 people participated in an online survey, 25 people attended an online open house and 22 people attended an invested organizations workshop. Participants envisioned Kelowna's 2040 urban forest as expanding, with large and mature trees made up of a healthy mix of native and climate suitable species, with lush tree-lined streets and strong tree protection measures in place.
 - *Spring 2024 Sustainable Urban Forest Strategy Engagement:* 350 people participated in an online survey, and 68 people participated in one of three open houses. 79 per cent of survey respondents supported the canopy targets that were proposed for each of the Growth Strategy Districts. Of those who did not support, many thought they were too low, while others suggested that trade-offs for wildfire safety, water scarcity and costs were not considered.
- GHG Emission Target Engagement
 - *Spring 2023 Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy Engagement:* 248 people participated in an online survey, 77 people participated in one of two open houses, 15 different invested organizations participated in a working group, 15 youth participated in a Youth Working Group; and 6 people participated in an equity seeking focus group. During this round of engagement most participants across the various engagement tactics reinforced the importance of taking action on climate. In fact, over 80 per cent of respondents agreed that the City's GHG emissions target should be revised to align with or be more ambitious than the provincial target (40 per cent reduction below 2007 levels by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050).
 - *Spring 2024 Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy Engagement:* 351 people participated in an online survey, 54 people participated in one of two open houses, 16 organizations participated in an invested organizations working group, and nine students (from eight different schools) participated in a youth working group. There was overwhelming support for climate action with a few comments that expressed skepticism or opposition to the overall strategy that was based on reducing GHG emissions 40 per cent by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by:

T. Guidi
Planner Specialist

Approved for inclusion: R. Miles, Long Range Planning Department Manager

Attachments:

Schedule A: Proposed Text Amendments (TA24-0016)