



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: August 20, 2015

From: John Irving, P.Eng. MPA
Director, Engineering

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Re: Climate Leadership Plan Comments

Staff Recommendation

That staff provide comments to the Climate Action Secretariat on the provincial "Climate Leadership Plan Discussion Paper," as presented in the staff report titled "Climate Leadership Plan Comments," dated August 20, 2015 from the Director, Engineering.

John Irving, P.Eng. MPA
Director, Engineering
(604-276-4140)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO FOR 	

Staff Report

Origin

In 2010, Council adopted targets in Richmond's Official Community Plan (OCP) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 33 percent below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050, noting Council's understanding that actions by the province to effect emissions reductions within provincial jurisdiction are necessary to achieve these targets. This report provides information on the process to develop the BC Climate Leadership Plan, and recommends steps for the City to inform the content of the Plan.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #4 Leadership in Sustainability:

Continue advancement of the City's sustainability framework and initiatives to improve the short and long term livability of our City, and that maintain Richmond's position as a leader in sustainable programs, practices and innovations.

4.1. *Continued implementation of the sustainability framework.*

4.2. *Innovative projects and initiatives to advance sustainability.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #5 Partnerships and Collaboration:

Continue development and utilization of collaborative approaches and partnerships with intergovernmental and other agencies to help meet the needs of the Richmond community.

5.1. *Advancement of City priorities through strong intergovernmental relationships.*

Analysis

Background

In 2008, the province of British Columbia released a Climate Action Plan, which outlined an array of climate action commitments. Correspondingly, in 2010, Council adopted targets in Richmond's OCP to reduce community GHG emissions 33 percent below 2007 levels by 2020, and 80 percent below 2007 levels by 2050. Council specified that these targets are "subject to the understanding that senior levels of government undertake necessary GHG reduction improvements within their jurisdictions with the necessary assistance being provided to the City."

Richmond's subsequent 2014 Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) outlines an array of strategies that the City is taking to pursue its energy and emissions goals. Importantly, the CEEP recognizes that City emissions reduction targets will only be achieved with "Big Breakthroughs," including widespread uptake of zero GHG transportation systems and new buildings, and deep energy retrofits of existing buildings. The CEEP recognizes that these reductions are not achievable by the City alone; rather, they require provincial and federal regulatory changes, market innovation, increasing carbon pricing, and coordinated efforts

between all levels of government and industry. Moreover, the CEEP includes the following strategy:

Strategy 12: Encourage Sustained Action by Senior Levels of Government.

Provincial Climate Leadership Plan

On May 12, 2015, the province announced its intention to develop a revised Climate Leadership Plan. This Climate Leadership Plan is seen as an important opportunity to build on the Province's existing suite of climate actions. The province noted that a draft version of the plan will be released in December 2015, and a final version in March 2016. Additionally, the province released a Discussion Paper (previously termed the "Framework for the Climate Leadership Plan") in July 2015, to facilitate public feedback on what should be included in the draft plan.

Anticipating this opportunity to provide comment on this Discussion Paper, on June 22, 2015, Council adopted a resolution that a letter under the Mayor's signature be sent to the Premier's office, requesting that the comment period on the Discussion Paper be extended to allow sufficient time for local government review. On August 6, 2015, the Deputy Minister of the Environment sent a letter to the Mayor and Council noting that comment submissions would be received beyond the original August 17, 2015 deadline. The Province has since issued an announcement that the opportunity for written submissions on the Discussion Paper will close September 14, 2015. This extension provides the opportunity for comment on the Discussion Paper to be provided by the City, to inform the ongoing development of the Climate Leadership Plan.

City Input into the Climate Leadership Plan

The development of the Climate Leadership Plan is a key opportunity for the City to provide input and comments on how the province might best support climate action by local government. There are a variety of changes in provincial regulations or policy that could facilitate action to reduce emissions at the local scale. There is an opportunity to communicate to the Province the City's perspectives both at this juncture while the province develops the draft Climate Leadership Plan, as well as during the comments period for draft plan, which is anticipated in December 2015.

It is recommended that staff provide comments to the Province regarding its Discussion Paper, highlighting key elements that the Climate Leadership Plan should include to maximize its efficacy at reducing emissions. Key comments are as follows:

- Carbon pricing – Whether through the carbon tax and/or an emissions cap and trade system, the province can continue to increase the price of carbon to reflect the full cost of releasing GHGs into the atmosphere.
- Zero carbon buildings – The CEEP identifies that for Richmond to meet its 2050 emissions targets, new buildings must be zero carbon by 2025, and widespread deep-energy improvements to existing buildings must occur. Such improvements will entail an exponential increase in the scale of building energy investments. The Climate Leadership

Plan should establish targets and actions for the new and existing buildings to achieve low-carbon performance.

- Transit and active transportation – Provincial investments in walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure will be a key to enabling the continued development of compact, liveable, and low carbon communities that are the basis of Richmond’s 2041 OCP. Such improvements require sustainable, long-term funding contributions.
- Renewable energy and district energy infrastructure – The Province can enable municipal action and incentivize investments in district energy and renewable energy systems through incentives, funding, and tax policies for all sectors.
- Waste management – Ongoing support for diverting waste for recycling and composting will reduce GHG emissions from the landfill and the production of virgin products. Richmond is a leader in organics diversion and other waste management programs. The Province should continue to value and support efforts to manage waste and enable private sector investment in waste management technologies.
- Natural areas preservation – Natural areas often comprise important “carbon sinks”, with carbon sequestered in soils and vegetation. Protection and appropriate land management techniques can prevent release of this stored carbon into the atmosphere and enhance natural areas’ long-term carbon sequestration potential, while also enhancing biodiversity and other amenities. In addition to working to enhance carbon sequestration in lands and waters under provincial jurisdiction, the province can support local government preservation of natural areas (i.e. bogs and parks) through funding programs and enabling policy and regulatory tools such as density transfer.

These suggested elements directly support many of the strategies and actions in Richmond’s 2014 CEEP and the 2041 OCP. Analysis performed for Richmond’s CEEP suggests that to reach the City’s and the Province’s current emissions targets, all of the strategies listed above will need to be employed. Likewise, similar conclusions were reached by the B.C. government’s Climate Action Team in 2008 in their document “Meeting British Columbia’s Targets,” and as part of efforts to quantify the impacts of the 2008 Climate Action Plan on regional emissions.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

This report recommends that staff communicate with the Climate Action Secretariat to provide comment on the Province’s Climate Leadership Plan Discussion Paper, working to ensure that the provincial governments takes steps within its jurisdiction that can help the City reach its energy and emissions goals.



Brendan McEwen
Sustainability Manager
(604-247-4676)