City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To:	General Purpose Committee	**Date:**	April 5, 2010
From:	Cathryn Volkering Carlile, General Manager- Community Services	**File:**	01-0370-01/2009-Vol01

Re: **Corporate Sustainability Policy**

Staff Recommendation

That the Corporate Sustainability Policy as presented in the report dated April 5, 2010 entitled "Corporate Sustainability Policy" be endorsed.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Community Services
(4068)

Atts: 2

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER					
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES ☑	NO ☐	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES ☑	NO ☐

2824794

Staff Report

Origin

On January 25, 2010 Council adopted the conceptual framework for the City of Richmond's Corporate Sustainability Framework. The Framework will establish a strategic management program for the City's sustainability initiatives, outlining core goals, strategies and performance targets. A core component of the Framework is the development of an overarching Corporate Sustainability Policy to set a common vision and strategic direction. The purpose of this report is to present to Council a proposed Corporate Sustainability Policy (Attachment 1).

The Corporate Sustainability Policy supports the following Council Term Goal:

Council Term Goal #7: " Sustainability and the Environment – *Demonstrate leadership in and significant advancement of the City's agenda for sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy that among other objectives includes incorporating sustainability into our City policies and bylaws".*

Background

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability has emerged as the term to describe a vision and practice for making choices that meet the diverse needs of communities today and those in the future[1]. The core of sustainability is to:

- achieve a good quality of life for all today, and
- ensure a quality future for our children and future generations.

Working towards sustainability means making choices which:

- respect limits (natural, social and economic);
- enable basic needs to be met; and
- distribute resources and opportunities fairly across current communities and future generations.

While sustainability is most commonly seen to be an imperative to respond to mounting challenges, it can also be viewed as an opportunity - an opportunity for catalyzing new forms of human development, ones that spark innovation, incorporate ingenuity and set new trajectories which better service economic prosperity, ecological health and ultimately, social well-being.

Sustainability Practices

Many governments, private sector business, institutions, non-profit agencies, groups and individuals are actively engaged in making changes to result in more sustainable forms of living. Generally, efforts consist of a collection of actions initiatives directed at various topics (e.g., building efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction, food security, affordable housing, environmental protection, etc.).

Leading organizations in sustainability are now seeking to establish robust and complete programs, ones that consider sustainability in a comprehensive manner and focus on strategic action. An overarching sustainability policy is a key component of comprehensive sustainability programs, setting the foundation for stronger and more cohesive action.

---

[1] Sustainable development (commonly referred to as 'sustainability') has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from the United Nations report Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report: "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*"

This foundation is created by:

- **Establishing a Shared Pathway** - A sustainability policy serves to increase understanding, articulating what sustainability means to a specific organization and how a given organization intends to pursue its sustainability commitment. This clarity is critical for enabling collective and consistent action (i.e., engaging the collective and rowing in the same direction).
- **Establishing Legitimacy** – By incorporating an official and public statement of commitment, a sustainability policy helps to strengthen legitimacy and set a stronger foundation for collective buy-in.

Various organizations have developed overarching Sustainability Policies, including the private sector, government and other agencies.

Analysis

Benefits of a Sustainability Policy for City of Richmond

The City of Richmond has undertaken a wide range of action initiatives aimed at advancing sustainability. Recognizing the value of a comprehensive approach, the City is one of the first municipalities to adopt an Enhanced Sustainability Initiative aimed at developing a robust and complete sustainability program. A review of program needs identified the value of implementing an overarching Sustainability Policy as a means to:

- increase the profile and transparency of Council's commitment to sustainability, better enabling others, both internally and externally, to understand the City's intentions;
- build corporate capacity by establishing a common base of understanding and language with respect to sustainability and enable greater corporate participation;
- facilitate partnerships which, among other benefits, includes placing the City in stronger positions for securing external funding;
- establish strategic direction and generate greater results (without greater expenditure).

Proposed Sustainability Policy

The proposed Corporate Sustainability Policy is provided in Attachment 1. The Policy was developed based on a review of various policies including VANOC, TransLink, BC Housing, McGill University, University of Calgary, City of Portland and City of Brisbane. Sustainability policies were found to be more common in private sector and academia. As such, if adopted, it is anticipated that the City of Richmond's proposed policy is likely to be one of the first overarching sustainability policies for municipal government.

Policy Objectives

The proposed Corporate Sustainability Policy serves to explicity convey how the City of Richmond is meeting its corporate sustainability responsibility. The Policy serves to meet 4 core objectives:

- establish institutional legacy
- establish a shared understanding and vision
- improve communication and transparency
- establish strategic direction for advancing sustainability.

The Policy serves as an overarching strategic policy to be supported by more detailed policies that establish specific sustainability performance objectives for particular areas. (Example of policies to date include the City's Affordable Housing Policy; Environmental Procurement Policy, GreenFleet Policy and Corporate High Performance Building Policy.)

Policy Content

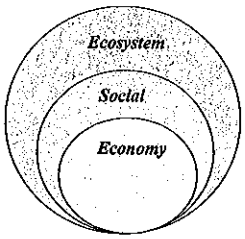
The proposed Policy consists of:

- formal commitment by the City of Richmond to sustainability;
- a guiding vision of sustainability for the City of Richmond, including definitions for social, economic and environmental sustainability;
- a high-level pathway for achieving sustainability through corporate adherence to five guiding sustainability principles and five sustainability practices;
- articulation of the City's role in advancing sustainability; and,
- commitment to policy review and continual improvement.

Policy Features

1. Sustainability Principles - *Recognition of the interdependency among social wellness, environmental health and economic well-being*

A major focus of the City's proposed Policy is the recognition of the interdependency among social wellness, environmental health and economic well-being. The Policy provides a lens through which to guide corporate decision-making and service delivery by establishing commitment to five sustainability guiding principles that serve to simultaneously create value among these three interrelated elements.



The three interdependent pillars of community sustainability.

2. Sustainability Practices - *Focus on Strategic Performance-Based Action*

Through the Sustainability Practices, the Policy sets the direction to advance sustainability to realise sustainability outcomes of significance. Conventional approaches to advancing sustainability tend to focus on integrating sustainability considerations into existing business decisions and practices (*doing things differently*). This approach at times does not optimize benefits due to a dilution of effort and lack of focus on core sustainability-based initiatives.

The proposed Corporate Sustainability Practices establish commitment to:

- integrate sustainability considerations into existing City decisions and activities (*doing things differently*) and
- advance sustainability through a strategic sustainability-driven action agenda (*doing different things*).

This approach means that the City will focus action on areas of high sustainability importance rather than simply trying to incorporate sustainability-based features into existing programs and services. With a new focus on strategic action, the City will be able to better consolidate its resources and direct them towards initiatives that deliver maximum benefit. At the same time, all employees will be responsible building individual sustainability capacity and aligning their business activities with the Sustainability Policy. By setting the direction towards strategic-based and multi-objective, the Policy will also enable the City to yield greater sustainability benefits for the same expenditure.

3. Policy Scope – *Leveraging Opportunities*

The Policy recognizes and leverages the multiple roles that are available to the City in advancing sustainability, namely:

1. behaving in a sustainable manner as a corporation when conducting City business and delivering civic services,
2. actively supporting the transition towards a more sustainable local community through use of municipal influence and jurisdictional tools, and
3. serving as an agent of change to help inspire greater collective action.

The Policy solely applies to the City of Richmond as a corporate entity.

Policy Implementation

Core Strategies

It is envisioned that the Policy will be implemented as follows:

1. **Council Leadership** – *(Council Term Goals)*

   The City of Richmond is organized to deliver services in accordance with the priorities and objectives of Council. Sustainability is currently identified as a Council Term Goal that enables the City to effectively activate the proposed Corporate Sustainability Policy and deliver high quality sustainability initiatives.

2. **Sustainability Strategic Program** (*Addressing Core Sustainability Goals*)

   The policy will be incorporated into and implemented through the City's Sustainability Framework. The City's Sustainability Framework establishes the City's strategic sustainability-based action agenda, outlining strategic goals, detailed policies, targets and actions that the City is and will be taking to meet its Sustainability Commitment. The Sustainability Framework is being developed through the use of interdepartmental teams. The City's Sustainability Services in collaboration with the City's Sustainability Leadership Committee will be responsible for implementing the Corporate Policy through the Sustainability Framework.

3. **Day-to-Day Business Integration Program** (*Unity in Principle, Diversity in Practice)*

   Ultimately, implementation of this policy is a shared responsibility amongst all City of Richmond employees. The sustainability commitment and corporate practices will be integrated by all City of Richmond employees into day-to-day business decisions and activities. City departments will be responsible for ensuring that business practices within their respective areas adhere to the Corporate Sustainability Policy and that work programs incorporate concrete actions in support of the Corporate Sustainability Policy.

   The City currently has some strategic tools, such as the GreenFleet policy, that help integrate sustainability into day-to-day business practices. Further tools are needed and will be developed over-time through both the Sustainability Strategic Program and departmental initiatives.

Attachment 1

Sustainability Foundations - Corporate Sustainability Policy

City of Richmond **Policy Manual**

Page 1 of 2	Adopted by Council: xx / xx / 2010	**POLICY xxxx**
File Ref:	**Corporate Sustainability Policy**	

POLICY xxx:

It is Council's Policy that:

1. The City of Richmond's Corporate Sustainability Policy provides the commitment, shared vision, guiding principles and corporate strategic practices for how the City of Richmond embraces and advances sustainability.

Corporate Commitment

2. The City of Richmond recognizes that a sustainable community is essential for achieving the City's Corporate Vision of "being the most appealing, liveable and well-managed community in Canada".

   The City of Richmond is committed to becoming a recognized leader in sustainability, advancing local community sustainability through excellence in local governmental sustainability practice and serving as an inspiration for greater collective change.

Envisioning Sustainability

3. The City of Richmond is guided by the following Vision of a Sustainable Richmond:

   "*A sustainable Richmond community is a healthy, safe and enriched island community with thriving natural systems and a responsible and prosperous economy, sustained for current and future generations.*"

   The City recognizes that the realization of this Vision is dependant on the collective achievement of three interdependent conditions:

   Social Sustainability – the condition where "basic needs are met, wealth and resources are distributed justly, equitable opportunities exist for social enrichment at the individual and community level and resiliency exists to address challenges"

   Environmental Sustainability – the condition where "the integrity of the life support systems of the Earth are maintained and enriched by socio-economic choices"

   Economic Sustainability – the condition where "social, natural and economic capital is managed to produce benefits that are enriching, non-eroding, equitable and fiscally responsible"

Communication Strategy

The Policy will be launched in June 2010 as part of the Sustainability Framework in accordance with the Framework development schedule outlined in Attachment 2. The Policy will be available through web access. Awareness of the Policy will be conducted through communications using the City's intranet site. The Corporate Sustainability Policy will also become a part of the City's Employee Orientation Program. In addition, Sustainability Services in collaboration with the City's Sustainability Leadership committee will work with departments to generate internal awareness of the Policy and support city-wide implementation. Action will include presentations to departmental meetings and continued engagement of staff in the development of the Sustainability Strategic Program.

A news release and newspaper bulletin will be prepared to advise the community of the City's new Sustainability Policy during the launch of the City's Sustainability Framework. The community will be able to provide input through the City's Sustainability Inbox. The Corporate Sustainability Policy and Framework is expected to evolve over time, responding to and reflecting corporate and community input. Further tools for supporting Policy implementation will also be developed.

Next Steps

The Sustainability Policy will be reviewed regularly and amended as appropriate. Specific sustainability performance objectives will be incorporated as they are developed.

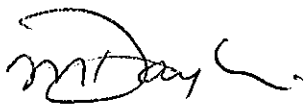
The Corporate Sustainability Policy completes Phase 2 in the development of the City's Sustainability Framework. The next phase to be developed (Phase 3) is the City's Climate Change Strategic Program which will be brought forward to Council in May 2010.

Financial Impact

None with this report.

Conclusion

Advancing sustainability provides an opportunity to meet community needs in a manner that is socially, environmentally and economically responsible. The City of Richmond has undertaken a suite of action to increase the sustainability value of its policies, plans and services. To enable the City to leverage greater value through more cohesive and collective action, this report recommends that Council adopt a Corporate Sustainability Policy. The proposed Policy articulates the commitment, shared vision, guiding principles and corporate strategic practices for how the City of Richmond embraces and will advance sustainability.



Margot Daykin, M.R.M.
Sustainability Manager
MD:md (4130)

Attachment 1

Sustainability Foundations - Corporate Sustainability Policy

City of Richmond **Policy Manual**

Page 1 of 2	Adopted by Council: xx / xx / 2010	**POLICY xxxx**
File Ref:	**Corporate Sustainability Policy**	

POLICY xxx:

It is Council's Policy that:

1. The City of Richmond's Corporate Sustainability Policy provides the commitment, shared vision, guiding principles and corporate strategic practices for how the City of Richmond embraces and advances sustainability.

Corporate Commitment

2. The City of Richmond recognizes that a sustainable community is essential for achieving the City's Corporate Vision of "being the most appealing, liveable and well-managed community in Canada".

   The City of Richmond is committed to becoming a recognized leader in sustainability, advancing local community sustainability through excellence in local governmental sustainability practice and serving as an inspiration for greater collective change.

Envisioning Sustainability

3. The City of Richmond is guided by the following Vision of a Sustainable Richmond:

   "*A sustainable Richmond community is a healthy, safe and enriched island community with thriving natural systems and a responsible and prosperous economy, sustained for current and future generations.*"

   The City recognizes that the realization of this Vision is dependant on the collective achievement of three interdependent conditions:

   Social Sustainability – the condition where "basic needs are met, wealth and resources are distributed justly, equitable opportunities exist for social enrichment at the individual and community level and resiliency exists to address challenges"

   Environmental Sustainability – the condition where "the integrity of the life support systems of the Earth are maintained and enriched by socio-economic choices"

   Economic Sustainability – the condition where "social, natural and economic capital is managed to produce benefits that are enriching, non-eroding, equitable and fiscally responsible"

Realizing Sustainability

4. The City will act according to the following Sustainability Principles (RESES):
    - **Respect** - There is respect for humans (individuals, the local community, the global community and future generations) and biodiversity.
    - **Equity** - It is recognized that no one should be constrained from realizing a just and acceptable standard of living. Decisions and actions will be made to result in a just distribution of resources and costs, among communities today and in the future.
    - **Social Inclusion and Cultural Enrichment** - Diversity is respected and celebrated, everyone is able to fully participate in and enjoy all aspects of community life and act on their responsibilities, and people enjoy and are supported by strong and vibrant human interactions.
    - **Ecological Integrity** - Ecological health is recognized as an essential foundation for social and economic well-being and decisions and activities are managed to achieve positive environmental outcomes.
    - **Security and Adaptability** - Individuals and communities are supported by resilient socio-economic systems, including a responsible economy based on renewable and reliable inputs (e.g., energy, water, food and raw resources), fiscal resilience and social effectiveness (e.g., living wages). Life-supporting systems, such as atmospheric conditions, are secure and both individuals and communities are able to anticipate and effectively respond to change.

5. The City will adhere to the following Sustainability Practices:
    - **Demonstrating Leadership** - The City will set sustainability-based goals of significance, adopt leading-edge practice and deliver results of substantive sustainability benefit.
    - **Being Accountable** - The City will advance a robust sustainability-driven management program, one which leads by need, focuses action investment on areas of high sustainability importance, takes action based on its established sustainability principles and measures performance against well-defined targets.
    - **Conducting Integrated Decision-Making** - The City will integrate sustainability throughout the organization, working in partnership with internal and external parties. The City will undertake *triple bottom line decision-making*, the practice of considering the socio-cultural, economic and environmental benefits and costs to current and future generations.
    - **Learning and Being Innovative** - The City will grow long-term organizational capacity and foster a culture of sustainability awareness and responsibility that promotes new ways of thinking. The City will challenge established norms, share knowledge, adopt emerging technologies and practices and drive progress through continual improvement.
    - **Engaging the Community** - The City recognizes that Sustainability requires collective action by all. Over time, the City will encourage greater levels of participation of the community, business, academia and other sectors to create a more sustainable community through partnerships and supportive programs.

Policy Scope

6. The scope of the City of Richmond Corporate Sustainability Policy is as follows:
    - The policy applies to all City decision-making and activities.
    - The policy recognizes the City's responsibility to operate in a manner that is socially, environmentally and financially sound and its broader ability to influence others to make more sustainable living choices.

Policy Review

7. This Policy will be reviewed and revised regularly..

Attachment 2

City of Richmond's Corporate Sustainability Framework
- Development Timeline -

The City is currently developing an overarching Sustainability Framework to establish a comprehensive set of sustainability goals, action programs and targets for the City. The timeline for developing the Framework is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Schedule for the Development of the City of Richmond's Sustainability Framework

Development Phase	Schedule	Progress*
Phase 1 :- Conceptual Framework (*adopted Jan. 25, 2010*)	Jan 2010	✓
Phase 2: Sustainability Foundations – Corporate Sustainability Policy	April 2010	✓
Phase 3: Climate Change Strategic Program	May 2010	
Phase 4: Mobility Strategic Program	June 2010	
Phase 5: Sustainable Resource Use Strategic Program - *Energy* Strategic Program	June 2010	
Framework Launch*		
Phase 6: Sustainable Resource Use Strategic Program - *Other Resources*	Nov. 2010	
Phase 7: Local Agriculture and Food Strategic Program	Dec. 2010	
Phase 8: Municipal Leadership Governance**	May 2011	
Phase 9: Green Built & Natural Environment Strategic Program	June 2011	
Phase 10: Social Inclusion, Safe Communities & Accessibility Strategic Program	Oct 2011	
Phase 11: Vibrant Communities Strategic Program	Nov. 2011	
Phase 12: Sustainable Economy Strategic Program	Dec. 2011	

*: ✓denotes complete; shading denotes current phase

**: this strategic program area will focus on reviewing city decision-making process and practices, and developing further tools for assisting the corporation in conducting triple bottom line decision-making.

By guiding sustainability-drive action in a systematic, strategic and more complete manner, the Framework is expected to result in the following core benefits:

- increased awareness and understanding of sustainability and the City's Sustainability Program
- a more complete Sustainability Program with better balance across the wide range of sustainability interests
- greater sustainability benefits for investment and reduced long-term costs from avoided impacts, fiscally responsible practices and increased ability to leverage funding[2]
- greater ability to review and report overall results, and drive progress through continuous improvement.

[2] Many senior government funding opportunities are now conditional upon the demonstration of comprehensive sustainability planning and action.