



City of Richmond

Report to Committee


To: General Purposes Committee
From: Mike Kirk
Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Date: July 14, 2008
File: 01-0370-01/2007-Vol01
Re: Corporate Sustainability Initiative – Progress Update

Staff Recommendation

That the Corporate Sustainability Initiative – Progress Update report (dated July 14, 2008 from the Manager of Sustainability) be received for information.

Mike Kirk
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Att.1

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	NO
	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

For several decades, the City of Richmond has undertaken a wide range of action to advance local community sustainability. Despite efforts by many, local communities are experiencing increasing difficulties in meeting current needs while preserving future generational health and well-being. In response to these increasing challenges, Richmond City Council adopted an Enhanced Sustainability Initiative to help strengthen its corporate efforts. This report provides a progress update on the City's Enhanced Sustainability Initiative and outlines intended next steps.

Background

About Sustainability

There is increasing awareness that conventional practices and forms of decision-making are insufficient for effectively meeting the diverse interests of communities today and in the future.

The advent of climate change, the depletion of natural resources at rates which exceed their regenerative capacity, the loss in agricultural viability, the increasing financial pressures facing municipalities, the growing disparity in social equity, the effects of chemicals on human health and exponentially growing populations have lead to increasing concerns about how businesses, governments, individuals and other institutions can best secure a quality of life for current and future generations. This challenge has brought the concept of sustainability to the international stage and to the immediate agendas of local communities.

*"Sustainability..
a way of
thinking"*

While sustainability is most commonly seen to be an imperative response 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.

Fundamentally, sustainability is a mind-set – a philosophy and approach. It is more than protecting the environment and more than any particular action initiative, rather it is an ethic and value-based process of decision-making which is intended to permeate everything we do and choose not to do.

Advancing sustainability requires a strategic and integrated approach to decision-making, one that continually considers the *relationship* between society, the economy and the environment.

City of Richmond Enhanced Sustainability Initiative

Purpose

The City has undertaken a wide range of action to advance local community sustainability. Some of these initiatives include the City's Affordable Housing Strategy, Environmental Sensitive Areas program, Terra Nova natural areas and park development, corporate High Performance Building Policy and Energy Management program, corporate GreenFleet program and employee car-pool program.

The Corporate Sustainability Initiative aims to build on our corporate success and increase the sustainability value of corporate action by strengthening organizational effectiveness and embedding sustainability thinking throughout the organization. A key focus of the Initiative is the adoption and practice of a Triple Bottom Line (TBL) decision-making approach – one which considers multiple benefits and costs across environment, economic and social considerations.

Key opportunities also exist to move the organization from a wide range of one-off, largely single-purpose initiatives to a strategic management approach, one which engages the entire corporation, is multi-objective based, coordinated by a common vision and cohesive approach, and advanced through continual improvement.

The first stage of the City's Sustainability Initiative is focussed on Corporate First - strengthening City capacity. Broader community engagement is anticipated to occur in the future, following a strengthened internal program.

Approach

The Sustainability Initiative is being developed based on the aspiration of developing "*Deep Roots*". A vision of legacy means that current early works are being dedicated at establishing a strong institutional foundation – one which is able to:

- foster a corporate-wide *culture* that itself lasts in perpetuity
- support *strategic* approaches that custom fit the organization
- foster learning and *continual improvement* of the entire corporation over the long-term
- focus on *integrating* sustainability into City work programs (rather than continually add additional one-off initiatives)
- result in *coordinated* sustainability action across the corporation.

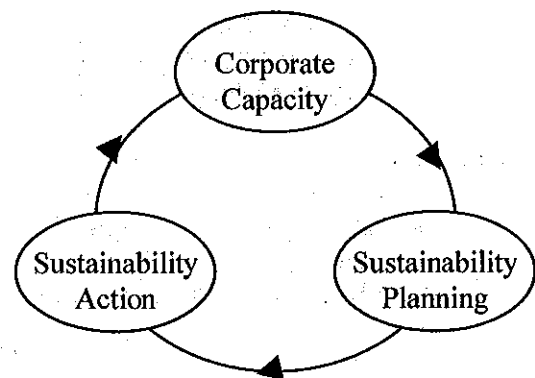
It is envisioned that this approach will support the City in pursuing a set of strategic-based action initiatives which generate high sustainability value¹, better leveraging existing programs and initiatives and embed sustainability as a long-lasting corporate value.

At the same time, departments are continuing to advance their sustainability action initiatives. Recent examples include the incorporation of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) requirements into proposal requests and evaluation criteria, the piloting of a solar and wind-powered lighting pole at Garry Point park and development of a corporate greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

Initiative Overview

Since its inception, an interdepartmental team has been directing effort in three priority areas:

- **Corporate Capacity Building** - *build capacity and competence to become increasing better leaders in sustainability*
- **Corporate Sustainability Planning** - *establish a framework for advancing sustainability through strategic cohesive action*
- **Corporate Sustainability Action** - *identify and act on opportunities collaboratively across the organization*



Work has predominately focussed on establishing a strong corporate base for advancement. Activities have been directed towards:

- building collective understanding of sustainability generally, reviewing best practices used in other areas, and evaluating current City approaches and action

¹ (e.g., working together to result in greater value than the sum of their individual parts, focus on high priority areas, managed to evolve over time as new knowledge and learnings are gained, etc.)

- developing tools to enable the advancement of corporate wide-action and strengthened implementation of triple bottom line decision making
- corporate program development, including resource development and staff recruitment.

Progress Report

An overview of the major phases, milestones and timeline are provided in the following table.

Stage	Phase	Timeline
1. Early Action	Wide range of action initiatives	1980-2007
2. Corporate Enhanced Initiative Launch	Report to Council – Addressing Richmond’s Sustainability Profile Compendium Report: “Charting Our Path”	March 2007
	<i>Milestone 1: Council Launches Enhanced Corporate Sustainability Initiative and Triple Bottom Line (TBL) decision-making</i>	March 2007
3. Building A Strong Corporate Foundation	Initiative Scoping²	March - June 2007
	Establishing Base Capacity	July 2007-July 2008
	<i>Milestone 2: Sustainability Office Established</i>	January 2008
	Developing Corporate-Wide Base Tools through Corporate Engagement –Phase 1	August – December 2008
	<i>Milestone 3: Finalization of TBL Guidebook</i>	Winter 2008
	<i>Milestone 4: Report to Council - Recommendation to adopt Sustainability Planning Framework (Phase 1)</i>	February 2009
	– Phase 2	January – June 2009
	<i>Milestone 5: Report to Council -Climate Change Impacts & Early Adaptation Recommendations</i>	Spring 2009
	<i>Milestone 6: Report to Council - Recommendation to adopt Sustainability Planning Framework (Phase 2)</i>	Summer 2009
	<i>Milestone 7: Report to Council -Carbon Neutral Response Plan</i>	Fall 2009
....Review and Assess Next Steps.....		

Progress
To-Date

Next
Steps

Highlight accomplishments of the Initiative include:

- establishment of a **Sustainability Office³**
- delivery of a **Sustainability Speaker** series (Attachment 1)
- Council adopted **Climate Change Response Strategy**
- City of Richmond signs the **British Columbia Climate Change Action Charter**.

Action initiatives underway include

- development of a Richmond-specific **Sustainability Planning Framework**
- development of a **Triple Bottom Line Guidebook**
- development of a **Climate Change Impacts and Early Adaptation Strategy**
- development of a corporate **Carbon Neutral Response Plan**.

² Building collective understanding of sustainability generally, best practices review, review and opportunities assessment of current City approaches and action

³ The major roles of this Office are to provide:

- corporate leadership to departments on integrating sustainability
- expert advice and support departments and tool development
- education and training
- coordination, communication and reporting.

A key challenge in corporate sustainability is the alignment and integration of diverse plans, civic functions, organizational structures and individuals into an inspirational yet achievable vision and action plan. To effectively bring all the diverse pieces together, the City is currently developing an overarching Richmond-Specific Sustainability Framework. This framework is intended to provide an ongoing roadmap to better enable the City to "see" a sustainability pathway holistically. The framework provides a tool for capturing what the City is already doing, evaluating current efficacy and linking strategic action to measurable targets and performance indicators, and benchmarking and reporting on success.

The objectives of the next phase (July – December 2008) of the Initiative are to:


- test drive the Triple Bottom Line guidebook throughout the organization, refine, and finalize
- develop and refine the Richmond- specific Sustainability Planning Framework through interdepartmental strategic teams
- initiate a Workplace Action Team to strengthen sustainability performance of daily corporate operations
- complete the Climate Change Impacts and Early Adaptation Strategy.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact with the Progress Update report.

Conclusion

The City of Richmond has undertaken a wide range of leading-edge action initiatives towards advancing local community sustainability. Recognizing mounting challenges and the need for greater change, Richmond Council adopted an Enhanced Sustainability Initiative. The Initiative aims to embed sustainability-based thinking into the fabric of the organization and the harness the power of strategic and system-wide action. To-date, the City has established a Sustainability Office and initiated major initiatives to support corporate-wide strategic action. Current key areas of focus are the development of a Richmond-specific Sustainability Framework, Triple-Bottom line decision-making guide, and Climate Change response action.



Margot Daykin, M.R.M.
Sustainability Manager

MD:md (4130)

Attachment 1: Sustainability Speaker Series

Date	Speaker	Topic
June 6, 2007	Guy Dauncey , Author, Speaker, Organizer and Sustainability Consultant	"Global Climate Change: Challenges and Practical Solutions"
September 19, 2007	Robert Safrata , CEO Novex Courier	"An Inconvenient Truth"
October 31, 2007	Ellen Pেকেles , Director – VanCity Sustainability Group	"Sustainability & Business – More Than Green"
November 28, 2007	Mark Holland , Principal of Holland Barrs Planning Group	"Sustainability: What it's all about and what municipalities can do"
January 30, 2008	Colin Grant , Founder and CEO Visible Strategies	"Even More Inconvenient Truths and Convenient Solutions"
February 27, 2008	Johnny Carline , CAO for Metro Vancouver	"Sustainability & the Region"
March 11, 2008	Kim Brand , Senior Manager at Bank of Nova Scotia	"Doing the right thing – a bottom-line issue"
June 25, 2008	Jill Porter Manager Inner - City Community Benefits VANOC	"Sustainability and 2010 Games"