

**REPORT TO PARKS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019**

SUBJECT **Climate Emergency Declaration – Supplementary Information**

ISSUE

To provide further background information on a climate emergency declaration by the Capital Regional District (CRD).

BACKGROUND

Climate Emergency Declaration

A growing list of cities, including seven in Australia, 11 in the UK, and seven in the USA, have joined an [international movement](#) to declare a State of Emergency focused on resolving the climate crisis. Declarers are expected to commit to greatly accelerate their climate action efforts.

On January 17, 2019, the [City of Vancouver](#) unanimously approved a motion declaring a climate emergency. The resolution included direction for staff to report back on opportunities to accelerate and update existing plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions before 2050.

Carbon Neutrality

Carbon neutrality typically involves measuring greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), reducing emissions by conserving electricity and fossil fuels, offsetting remaining emissions by purchasing an equivalent amount of high-quality carbon offsets and reporting publicly on progress on an annual basis. The CRD is a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter and, as such, has been carbon neutral in its corporate operations since 2012. Due to the provincial legislation around carbon neutral government requirements in BC, carbon neutrality is typically associated with GHGs related to corporate operations.

Achieving community carbon neutrality will require collective action with significant positive and negative incentives, such as building retrofits, transportation reform and investment in new infrastructure. For our region, these actions primarily rest with the provincial government and are outside the scope of existing CRD authority and mandate. Other local measures are within the authority of municipalities and electoral areas. At the present time, the CRD supports these types of actions through data collection and reporting, and regional initiative coordination.

Community emissions are significantly larger than corporate emissions and would require a separate emissions inventory to validate a carbon neutral process. Much of the data necessary to complete such an inventory is not currently available, such as regional transportation emissions, and would necessitate funding, collaborative action and legislative changes and alignment with provincial and municipal/electoral area jurisdictions to develop.

Other Climate Action Targets

The CRD, local governments and neighbouring jurisdictions currently use a range of emissions targets that typically reference emissions reductions, and renewable energy and net zero carbon emissions. Examples include:

- The CRD set a community-wide GHG emission reduction target to reduce community greenhouse gas emission by 33% (from 2007 levels) by 2020, and 61% by 2038 ([2018 RGS – Bylaw 4017](#)). The capital region is not anticipated to meet the 2020 targets.
- In 2018, the Province of BC introduced legislation to set new GHG emission reduction targets (based on 2007 levels):
 - 40% reduction by 2030
 - 60% reduction by 2040
 - 80% reduction by 2050
- In December 2018, the province introduced a new climate change plan, which is expected to put the province on track for 75% of its 2030 target. Updates are expected over the next 18-24 months on how it will meet the remaining 25%.
- A number of CRD municipalities have recently updated their climate-related targets. For example, the City of Victoria and District of Saanich have both adopted targets to reach an 80% reduction in GHGs and transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050. The District of Central Saanich has set similar goals in its updated Climate Leadership Plan. The Township of Esquimalt set a target of zero net community greenhouse gas emission by 2050. The City of Colwood set a 93% per capita reduction in GHGs and an 80% community-wide reduction by 2050.

CRD Opportunities

In regard to climate action, the CRD's mandate is to support regional collaboration around climate action efforts amongst the region's local governments and to reduce emissions in its corporate buildings, fleet and infrastructure and prepare the assets for climate change.

With additional staff and financial resources, the CRD could play an enhanced role in supporting local governments and other partners to understand collaborative opportunities, priorities and needs for climate action. The CRD could lead efforts to coordinate initiatives, represent the region in advocacy to senior levels of government, and support regional funding applications, and advance infrastructure and community-focused projects.

Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) Theme Partnership Program

Further information about the PICS Theme Partnership Program is below:

- Project teams must include at least one applicant who holds a regular faculty position at one of the four PICS partner institutions located throughout the province.
- Projects will be funded to a maximum of \$250,000 per year per project for up to four years.
- One project will be awarded funding through the 2018-2019 intake. Subsequent award competitions will be held every 12-18 months.

- A letter of intent needs to be developed in collaboration with a project partners, and is due February 15, 2019.
- If the motion is adopted by the Committee, staff would initiate discussions with potential academic partners and provide a status update at the February 13 Board meeting. Given the tight timeline, staff anticipate that interested academic groups may have already established project partnerships.

Climate Adaptation

The region will continue to experience the impacts of climate change, despite local, regional and global greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction efforts. Managing climate risks through adaptation-focused efforts will be a continuous, essential requirement of any climate action strategy.

CONCLUSION

All levels of governments in Canada have identified climate change as a priority policy area and are developing plans, policies and strategies to address this issue. The CRD and local governments have identified emission reduction targets, as well as actions to address GHG mitigation and adaptation to a changing climate.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks & Environment Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this report be received for information.

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