

Sustainability Report: Towards a Healthy, Resilient and Regenerative Saskatoon

ISSUE

The attached report (Appendix 1 – The Sustainability Division: Toward a Healthy, Resilient and Regenerative Saskatoon) provides an overview of the Sustainability Division in order to gain perspective on the roles and functions that the City of Saskatoon’s (City) environmental sustainability program has traditionally supported; whether that be through independent Division work, in partnership with other divisions, or in collaboration with the community. The report also looks ahead and outlines roles, responsibilities, and tasks which serve to better align with community, corporate and strategic direction for 2020-2021.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on June 12, 2017, City Council was presented with the Civic Environmental Sustainability Program report as information.

At its meeting on August 7, 2018, the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services was presented the following reports for consideration:

- Internal Audit – CO2 Reduction Initiatives Report, from Internal Auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, dated June 2018; and
- Administrative Response – PwC – CO2 Reduction Initiatives Audit Report.

At the same meeting, City Council resolved:

“That the report of the Internal Auditor on the CO2 Reduction Initiatives and the report of the Acting General Manager, Corporate Performance Department dated August 7, 2018, be received as information.”

In 2018, the City underwent administrative restructuring, which created an opportunity to review, re-imagine and re-align the City’s environmental and sustainability work.

In January 2019, the Environmental & Corporate Initiatives Division was renamed Sustainability Division and housed within the Utilities & Environment Department.

CURRENT STATUS

Partly spurred by changing corporate structures and increasing public interest in environmental responsibility, the City’s environmental sustainability program has transitioned over the last fifteen years from a mandate strongly focused on waste, to one that embraces a broader definition of sustainability focused on Climate Action, Green Infrastructure, Environmental Protection, and Community Outreach (Appendix 2).

The Sustainability Service Line describes the provision of environmental and sustainability support, planning, education, greenhouse gas tracking, reporting, analysis, research, project management, and engineering to the corporation and

community. Broadly defined, the work scope includes environmental protection and compliance, natural systems, energy efficiency, waste and water reduction, climate action, corporate planning, and community leadership.

Approved in September 2019, and effective January 2020, the City's new Triple Bottom Line Council Policy requires that the City pursue "a holistic approach to sustainability by embedding environmental, social, and economic considerations in the City's decision making processes." The Sustainability Division is currently providing support to operationalize the Policy, while each City Division is responsible for ensuring that sustainable, co-benefits are planned into and achieved through corporate decision making and initiatives.

Current resources are used toward the development and implementation of strategies for the corporation and community that achieve positive environmental outcomes and co-benefits within the City. Corporate and community performance toward environmental goals is tracked on the City's [Environmental Dashboard](#).

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Sustainability initiatives are highlighted in the report for the value that they bring to the community and the City (Appendix 3 - At a Glance: The Value of the Sustainability Division). For example:

- The Sustainability Division leverages funding from external sources, including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the National Research Council of Canada (NRCan), and provincial utilities, amongst others. The City has obtained multiple grants since 2002 to achieve environmental outcomes. These projects successfully obtained \$3.15M in Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and NRCan grants, \$4.43M in FCM loans, and \$387,360 in other grants to carry out projects valued at over \$20M.
- Support for community initiatives. The City's Environmental Grant supports community groups to carry out sustainability initiatives. The program has leveraged community investment by approximately seven times the value of the City funding, in which the City has supported 34 grants by providing \$90,000 in funding over the last five years, resulting in \$660,000 in community sustainability investments.
- Facilitate asset improvements for operational savings and user satisfaction. The City's Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) project is leading facility improvements valued at \$36M. Completed preliminary initiatives have already led to upwards of \$180,000 in annual savings, while the entire contemplated scope of work is estimated to result in over \$1.1M in annual savings. Not only do EPC projects reduce facility operating costs, they also reduce annual emissions, contribute to asset renewal, and provide facility comfort.
- Save money through utility bill management. The Sustainability Division manages utility bills for City operations through measurement and verification, creating budgets, and analysis of utility consumption and costs, which has led to \$877,234 in savings since 2017.

- Properly manage hazardous waste. The 2019 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program saw seven of the largest events in the program's history with records set in participation (3,930 vehicles) and weight of material collected (148,844 kg). Since 2015, the HHW program has received 540,024 kg (540 tonnes) of household hazardous waste from 15,369 residents.
- Collaborate with corporate and community partners. The Sustainability Division recognizes that internal and external partnerships and collaboration are key to effectively and successfully implementing its work plan and mandate. The Sustainability Division partnered or collaborated with more than 25 External organizations within 2019.

New leadership within the Sustainability Division and the Utilities & Environment Department has provided an opportunity to revisit the approach to the Sustainability Division's initiatives and operations while working toward implementation of City Council's 2018-2021 Strategic Goals. This work has been influenced by the context of increasing awareness of the global climate crisis, a better understanding of the impacts of global heating on Saskatoon and emissions target status, development of a new Official Community Plan, formative reports and council direction, and strategic corporate processes.

The attached report outlines an evolving role for the Sustainability Division to better address corporate risk, service gaps and to co-design and support the community's sustainability actions. To this end, it lays out planned activities by section for 2020-2021, including:

- Process improvements for managing and reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions, energy management, impacted soils and the wetland policy;
- 10 and 30 year map to coordinate actions from Low Emissions Community Plan, Corporate Adaptation Plan and the Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- Prepare the terms for Council's consideration on an environmental sustainability reserve;
- Project delivery and support for PACE financing, Community Electric Vehicle pilot, Triple Bottom line, Recovery Park; High Performance Building Policy and Solar Strategy;
- Develop Industrial, Commercial and Institutional waste and green infrastructure programs;
- Support environmental protection processes through the development of erosion control guidelines, borehole policy and spills policy;
- Progress the energy performance contract with efficiency retrofits to thirty city facilities; and
- Review and refine current community education program offerings, including Healthy Yards, Household Hazardous Waste Days, Environmental Grants and Sanitary Sewer.

With a clear view of goals and tasks for the next fiscal period, we aspire to gain momentum on strategic goals and targets and work toward a vision for a sustainable

community, where every citizen and organization enjoys and prospers in a clean, healthy, resilient and regenerative city.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps in the 2018 Services Savings and Sustainability report states that the 2019 Services Savings and Sustainability report will be presented to City Council in the second quarter of 2020. The Low Emissions Community Plan annual report will be prepared for reporting in early 2021. Projects and programs will be reported to Committee and Council in due course as individually required.

APPENDICES

1. The Sustainability Division: Toward a Healthy, Resilient and Regenerative Saskatoon
2. Sustainability Division Graphic
3. At a Glance: The Value of the Sustainability Division

REPORT APPROVAL

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