

Climate Commitment and Call to Action: City of Saskatoon and University of Saskatchewan

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) and the University of Saskatchewan (USask) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2017 to strategically increase collaboration between the two organizations. Numerous subcommittees have been established to progress the work of the MOU, including the Climate Change (Sustainability) Task Team.

Both the City and USask seek to reinforce their mutually beneficial relationship and progress equitable climate action and support natural systems, collaboratively. To progress this goal, approval is being sought for the Climate Commitment and Call to Action (the Climate Commitment).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services recommend to City Council that the City of Saskatoon act as signatory to the Climate Commitment and Call to Action with the University of Saskatchewan as outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND

On June 26, 2017, City Council set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets for Saskatoon based on the 2014 inventory as follows:

- “1. 40% reduction in GHG emissions for the City of Saskatoon (City) as a corporation by 2023; and a reduction of 80% by 2050.
2. 15% reduction in broader community emissions by 2023 and a reduction of 80% by 2050.”

In September 2017, City Council approved the following recommendations:

- “1. That the City of Saskatoon enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Saskatchewan with the terms and intent as outlined in this report; and
2. That the City Solicitor be instructed to draft a Memorandum of Understanding based on the contents of this report, and to do so in collaboration with the appropriate persons at the University of Saskatchewan.”

At its meeting held on August 26, 2019, City Council received The *LEC Plan* and resolved:

- “1. That engagement with the Community and Stakeholders is undertaken to further advance planning and to develop comprehensive implementation strategies for preliminary initiatives included in the *LEC Plan*;
2. That the Administration report back on ways we can partner with the private, institutional, and non-profit sectors in order to provide opportunities for other sectors to take the lead on, and provide feedback on the initiatives they are undertaking and intending to undertake with respect to the relevant portions of the *LEC Plan*; and
3. That the Administration report back on how we can partner and collaborate with, but not limited to, Saskatchewan municipalities, SUMA, and the provincial government with respect to the proposed *LEC Plan*.”

At its meeting held on December 16, 2019, City Council received *The Corporate Climate Adaptation Strategy – Local Actions: Saskatoon’s Adaptation Strategy (Part Two)*. The report was received as information.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The City – USask MOU sets out terms for a working group to collaboratively address issues of mutual concern. The September 2017 report sets out shared strategic priorities, stating that environmental sustainability (riverbank, swale and natural areas preservation) and reconciliation have both been identified as important for the City and USask, along with the possibility of collaboration and of working with other groups in these areas. Following this, the Sustainability Task Team was formed, and the Climate Commitment was identified as a deliverable to progress the MOU.

The Climate Commitment (Appendix 1) acknowledges that the City and USask are working to reduce GHG emissions and adapt infrastructure, services, and programs for the future impacts of a changing climate. Both organizations have committed to pursuing sustainable actions that achieve environmental, social, and economic benefits. This commitment recognizes the need to enhance sustainable and resilient practices and that action is needed to slow, and ultimately prevent the rise in the global average temperature and to facilitate the equitable transition to a clean energy economy. It recognizes a human centered approach and the importance of climate change effects on vulnerable populations.

The Climate Commitment pledges to work together to improve and accelerate equitable climate performance with a focus on:

- Reconciliation, Decolonization and Indigenization;
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion;
- Buildings and Energy Efficiency;
- Sustainable Transportation;
- Sustainable Land Use;
- Solid Waste Reduction;
- Renewable Energy;
- Water Conservation;
- Environmental Protection and Ecosystem Stewardship;

- Collaboration;
- Leadership; and
- Accountability.

Both the City and USask have unique documents which provide climate strategies, targets and actions that are relevant to their own organizations' mandate and the wider community. The Climate Commitment demonstrates leadership and support for climate mitigation and adaptation actions within our community. It invites others to set their own targets and plans that commit to collective actions toward climate goals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

City Council approving the Climate Commitment does not commit any financial resources to any projects that may arise through the pledge, and that any identification of resources would follow standard processes for approval.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Social and Sustainability Implications

The work relevant to the scope of the Climate Commitment seeks to achieve GHG emissions reductions, improve climate resiliency, provide stewardship for nature and natural areas, and not leave anyone behind. Equitable climate initiatives can lead to multiple co-benefits including:

- Our health is improved;
- Our economy is diverse and resilient to both local and global change;
- Reduced expenses for residents, businesses and the municipality; and
- Improved equity and quality of life.

There are no privacy or legal implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

The City and USask are planning an event to celebrate the signing of the Climate Commitment, which is scheduled for the week of September 6th, 2021. Communications and media interactions are being jointly managed.

Further work to progress the work of the Sustainability Task Team and other subcommittees under the MOU will occur in due course.

APPENDICES

1. Climate Commitment and Call to Action: City of Saskatoon and University of Saskatchewan

Report Approval

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