

## Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee October 2019 – Advice to City Council on 2020 Budget Prioritization

Firstly, congratulations on being nominated for a Rob Dumont Energy Management Award for Leadership in developing the Low Emissions Community Plan (LEC Plan). It's an honor to be recognized by industry and the community.

The LEC Plan lists 40 actions for Saskatoon to meet our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and recommended implementation timelines for each action. In order to meet our targets, action needs to happen as laid out in the Plan. **As you know, it is vital for Saskatoon, like the rest of the world, to dramatically reduce our emissions in order to help prevent the worst climate impacts.** In our letter to City Council, dated August 19, 2019, we lay out our strong support for adopting this plan.

In your capital prioritization budget deliberations, 53 actions are vying for \$18 million that is available through the one-time Gas Tax doubling and two years of the Reserve for Capital Expenditures. Of these actions, 25 are prioritized from the LEC plan. You have some tough choices and we acknowledge that; however, **we remind you that time is running out to take action on climate change.**

In our letter dated October 30, 2018 to SPC Environment, Utilities, and Corporate Services regarding capital decision making, **we urged you to set up a stable source of funds dedicated specifically to moving greenhouse gas emission reduction projects forward; with the release of the LEC plan, we stand by this recommendation.**

**We also urge you to prioritize support to operationalize the Triple Bottom Line Policy in the form of the requested resource,** so that all divisions may more easily include greenhouse gas emission reduction in their decision making.

SEAC considered whether we could recommend or prioritize certain actions in the Capital Prioritization process to support your deliberations today. However, as volunteers with limited resources and without context for all actions on this list, we did not feel equipped to provide this advice. In addition, **we strongly believe that Saskatoon needs to implement ALL ACTIONS associated with the LEC plan. Therefore, we recommend that you find a way, whether through the Gas Tax or other mechanisms, to approve the funding as requested.** This will give Saskatoon the best possible opportunity to meet the set GHG emission reduction targets and do our part to limit the effects of climate change.

As you work to find funding for these actions, you may want to consider the following:

- The marginal abatement curve in the LEC Plan, both wide bars (e.g. municipal retrofits) and tall bars (e.g. transit electric vehicles);
- The financial savings and economic benefits of savings from projects should as noted in the LEC, the payback for the entire community of this plan is as little as 10 years;



- The socio-economic benefits of each project. The LEC Plan also details the benefits of transition to a low emission community;
- The cost of inaction. As the LEC plan notes, each dollar spent on mitigation efforts is projected to prevent six dollars required on adaptation down the road;
- Potential for private/alternative funding for certain projects. For example, individuals or organizations may wish to invest in the community scale solar project, and investment by the City makes this broader opportunity possible;
- Policy options that have a small cost, but enable big actions, such as developing a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program;
- Actions with high likelihood of success, making them “just do its” (e.g. municipal appliance upgrades);
- Actions that ready the City for global trends, such as electric vehicle charging; and,
- The recently endorsed Triple Bottom Line Policy.

**We all need to do everything we can, as quickly as possible, to minimize climate change impacts.** Administration has provided you with a good plan for moving forward and you can no longer say you don't know what needs to happen.

SEAC strongly recommends to City Council to find a way to proceed with all actions from the LEC plan. Positive results may be observed many years into the future and will possibly occur beyond your own time as a sitting member of City Council. We encourage you to keep the big picture in mind as you make your decisions. By progressing these actions today, you have the ability to take the first step that will leave a lasting legacy for your tenure.

Respectfully,



*for* Sara Harrison  
Chair, Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee