

Climate Action Plan – Progress Report 2020

ISSUE

When the *Low Emissions Community Plan (LEC Plan)* was presented in 2019, the Governance and Priorities Committee directed annual reporting on its progress. The *Climate Action Plan: Progress Report 2020* (the Progress Report) incorporates updates on the greenhouse gas emission inventories, the *LEC Plan*, and the *Corporate Climate Adaptation Strategy (Corporate Adaption Strategy)* and defines potential work to accelerate progress.

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.”

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 October 21, 2019, the Governance and Priorities Committee received a subsequent report, *Low Emissions Community Plan – Opportunities and Partnerships*. It was resolved, in part:

“That Administration report annually on the *LEC Plan* progress, including any changes to assumptions made in the preparation of the report. This includes changes to any provincial, federal, or international targets or programs that impact the ability to implement the *LEC Plan*. An example of this would be any changes to National Building Code targets.”

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.

CURRENT STATUS

In 2019, the City defined a Climate Action Plan comprised of mitigation and adaptation strategies:

- The *LEC Plan* is a roadmap to reduce emissions and help mitigate climate change.
- The *Corporate Adaptation Strategy* is the framework that will help the City as an organization prepare for and adapt to a changing climate.
- A Community Adaptation Strategy has not yet been initiated; it will be a plan for the Saskatoon community to prepare for the effects of climate change and global heating.

The Climate Action Plan provides a roadmap to achieve the climate change mitigation and adaptation goals over a 30-year timeframe, once fully complete. This Progress Report charts the actions, milestones, and timeframes from the Adaptation and LEC Plans, and details initiatives that have progressed over 2019 and 2020. Appendix 1 - *Climate Action Plan: Progress Report 2020*, provides an update on Saskatoon’s current emissions; the status and accomplishments related to the actions, risks, and barriers to completing the actions; and recommended next steps.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Current Emissions

From 2014 to 2019, Saskatoon’s community GHG emissions decreased by 2% or by approximately 80,000 tonnes CO₂e over the 5-year period. Analyses indicates that the reduction is primarily due to improved accuracy of data, rather than reductions in activities that generate emissions.

The GHG reduction goals are based on absolute emissions, which have remained relatively constant over the 5-year period. However, despite an increase in Saskatoon’s population, per capita emissions have decreased by 15%. This indicates that community actions are influencing the rate at which we generate emissions, but not enough to impact the targeted absolute emissions.

The City’s Corporate emissions increased by 5% or by approximately 5,000 tonnes CO₂e over the same 5-year period. The change was from increases in the Water & Wastewater, Fleet, Waste, Other Energy, and Agriculture sectors. Emissions from buildings and streetlights decreased over the 5-year period. City corporate emissions represent approximately 3% of the community emission total.

Low Emissions Community Plan

The Progress Report opens with a report card for Actions the *LEC Plan* recommends starting in the years 2019, 2020, or 2021. This detail is drawn from the *LEC Plan’s* Phased Implementation and the next steps needed to meet the milestone targets’ timing

and GHG reductions set out in the Plan. For each Action, the next steps are defined through a series of sub-actions required for full implementation.

The Progress Report details specific Actions across the Corporation and the community which progress the *LEC Plan*. The community-focused initiatives which progressed in 2020 include:

Sector	Community-Focused Initiative
Buildings & Efficiency	The Home Energy Loan Program for energy efficiency and energy generation projects for single family homeowners progressed.
Buildings & Efficiency	Aspen Ridge reserved 12 lots for sale for net-zero homes.
Buildings & Efficiency	SaskPower Energy Assistance Program, partnered to include SL&P customers.
Transportation	Bus Rapid Transit planning progressed toward construction in 2022.
Transportation	Cycling improvements including revisions to Bylaws 9075 and 7200, and plan completed for 7.5KM AAA facilities.
Transportation	Sidewalk improvements including, missing sidewalks, 30KM infill sidewalks, \$3M for sidewalks in existing neighbourhoods, and ramp design standards update.
Transportation	Educational campaign to encourage road safety and community grant to promote active transportation.
Land Use	Bylaw No. 9700, The Official Community Plan, 2020 adopted.
Energy	The City's landfill gas collection facility added 12 vertical wells to the existing 29 wells.
Energy	Feasibility Study to install a utility-scale solar PV system on Parcel M.
Energy	Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) program progressed, scheduled for completion by the end of Q1 2022.
Water	Long-term water conservation strategy under development
Waste	City-wide curbside organics program planning for a spring 2023 roll-out.
Waste	Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Plan finalized.

Actions progressed to reduce the City's corporate emissions include:

Sector	Corporate Initiative
Buildings & Efficiency	5,000 streetlights replaced with LED fixtures.
Buildings & Efficiency	High-Performance Building Policy and Administrative Guidelines developed.
Buildings & Efficiency	IT Print optimization commenced.
Transportation	4 electric vehicles for Saskatoon's fleet, plans progressed for pilot.
Transportation	Electric bus pilot commenced.
Transportation	GPS added to fleet vehicles to optimize use and reduce fuel consumption.
Energy	Solar assessment for up to 8 civic facilities progressed.

While the 2020/2021 Municipal Budget allocated funding for projects which progressed the *LEC Plan*, it is too early to see results through the emissions inventory. Furthermore, many of the Actions include additional sub-actions to implement strategies and feasibility studies, or to advance pilots funded in 2020. Importantly, these Actions

begin laying the groundwork for future emissions reductions at scale in the community and the corporation.

There are areas with little or no near-term progress, including:

- Actions 6 & 8 to improve energy use and thermal energy demand for new residential buildings, targeting net-zero ready by 2036; defined as development of a municipal step code in the Plan. During consultations in 2019, the building industry suggested the City should not get ahead of the National Building Code (NBC update expected in 2021/2022);
- Action 11 to develop a commercial, institutional, and industrial energy efficiency and renewables financing program. This action was deferred to complete a residential Home Energy Loan Program; a request for funding for a commercial program will be brought to Business Plan and Budget deliberations;
- Action 30, to install solar PV at Parcel M has progressed, however, the sub-action (30.1) to bring a virtual net metering policy forward requires further review and will be considered through a renewable energy strategy currently under development; and
- Actions 17 and 21 to develop strategies for the adoption of community and corporate electric vehicles. These were deferred in favour of electric vehicle pilots for fleet, charging stations and a bus.

Emissions goals are set at 40% reduction for Corporate emissions and 15% reduction for community emissions by 2023, leading to both achieving 80% reduction by 2050 (over 2014 levels). The *LEC Plan* states that, “The success of the plan lies in the City and the community’s ability to follow the roadmap outlined in this report and implement every action.” The status of the emissions reporting and the LEC progress indicates that while progress is being made in some environmental sectors, 2023 GHG emissions reduction targets are at risk of not being reached.

The *LEC Plan* states that the target of 80% GHG emissions reduction by 2050 can be met if the actions identified are fully resourced and fully executed according to the recommended schedule. The Progress Report shows that it is a challenge to follow the 30-year plan as outlined, due in part to funding availability. The City has many important priorities that compete for resources on an annual basis. The Administration will continue to bring forward projects that support our environmental goals during the annual business plan and budget process. Any actions in the plan that cannot proceed for any reason will be replaced with new, comparable Actions when the *LEC Plan* is refreshed, which is planned in 2025.

Corporate Climate Adaptation Strategy

Some progress to prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change is being achieved through City initiatives including: the *Triple Bottom Line Policy*, *Asset Management Strategy*, *Green Infrastructure Strategy*, and the Emergency Management Organization. Addressing the actions in the *Corporate Adaptation Strategy* can be

achieved through a combination of these and other dedicated City initiatives, with assigned, additional resources.

In the *Corporate Adaptation Strategy*, 20 of the 30 initiatives identified have been initiated. Of those 20 initiatives, seven are classified as ‘moderate progress’, one is classified as ‘significant progress’, and one is considered ‘complete’. The remaining 10 initiatives have not yet started. To align with the prioritization outlined in the *Corporate Adaptation Strategy*, an additional 5 of the 30 initiatives will need to be initiated within the next year. Again, the Administration will bring forward options during the annual Business Plan & Budget process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this information report, however, high level financial analysis was undertaken for each Action in preparing the *LEC Plan* to identify the investment required, net present value, the return on investment, marginal abatement costs, and employment impacts. The *LEC Plan* outlines how early investments in emission reduction benefits adaptation efforts, and costs less over the long-term than investing 20-50 years in the future.

To prepare for timely Climate Action implementation, business cases have been developed for consideration in the 2022/2023 Business Plan and Budget deliberations and other funding opportunities. The Progress Report Appendix A includes the near-term business cases – defining project scope, benefits, risks, and resource needs – which advance the *LEC Plan* and strive to progress the emissions goals.

In the 2020/2021 budget, a Sustainability Reserve was established with an annual contribution of \$250,000 per year. While the purpose of this reserve is to fund Sustainable Initiatives including those outlined in the Climate Action Plan, additional funds would be required to progress actions in alignment with the milestone targets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Progress Report demonstrates how work in key environmental sectors related to climate mitigation and adaptation is being carried out across many Departments in the Corporation. As shown in the report, while many Actions have been initiated, the City and community are not currently on-track to meet the interim GHG emissions reduction targets of 40% and 15% by 2023, respectively. However, investments made now toward the climate mitigation actions outlined in the *LEC Plan* and *Corporate Adaptation Strategy* should enable the City and the community to successfully meet the 80% GHG emissions reduction target by 2050 and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate, as well as achieve multiple community benefits such as:

- Our health is improved;
- Our economy is diverse and resilient to both local and global changes;
- Employment is generated through a green economy;
- Expenses are reduced for residents, businesses, and the municipality; and
- Equity and quality of life are improved.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are many barriers that result in the disproportionate uptake of sustainability initiatives by higher-income households compared to lower-income households. This gap is compounded by the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable populations. As the City continues to respond to the causes and effects of climate change, Saskatoon's programs, policies, and services must consider the unique challenges and opportunities that the *LEC Plan* and *Corporate Adaptation Strategy* present to all social groups. A new tool called the *Equity Toolkit for Projects* is being developed to aid staff, in conjunction with the *Triple Bottom Line Policy and Framework*, in developing and delivering equitable programs and projects.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

While there are significant benefits of adopting the Actions in the *LEC Plan*, there are also risks of doing nothing. One risk of doing nothing is that with slower mitigation and adaptation responses there is potential for more severe impacts from climate change. A further risk of doing nothing is that we miss supporting the transition to a low carbon urban system, and therefore Saskatoon households and the private sector could fail to take advantage of long-term benefits resulting from early actions. Missed opportunities for co-benefits in improved health outcomes, economic development, a more resilient energy system, and improved quality of living that are synergistic with climate action energy and emissions outcomes are also identified as a risk of doing nothing.

There are no other implications directly resulting from this information report.

NEXT STEPS

The Progress Report is an assessment of the status of actions identified in the *LEC Plan* and the *Corporate Adaptation Strategy*.

A comprehensive report, including a more robust assessment of the LEC Actions and milestone targets and replacement or accelerated Actions needed to meet GHG goals, is planned for 5-year intervals with the next report scheduled for 2025. Interim progress reports will be completed annually or as applicable.

APPENDIX

1. Climate Action Plan: Progress Report 2020

Report Approval

Written by: Matthew Regier, Environmental Coordinator
Amber Weckworth, Manager, Climate, Strategy & Data

Reviewed by: Jeanna South, Director of Sustainability

Approved by: Angela Gardiner, General Manager, Utilities & Environment

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