

2017 Climate Change Communications Highlights

BACKGROUND

In November 2015, the City of Saskatoon became a signatory of the Compact of Mayors (now known as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy). As a first step towards compliance, the City completed a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory in 2016 using 2014 data. The inventory showed an increase in emissions since the previous 2003 greenhouse gas inventory.

In June 2017, City Council passed new greenhouse gas reduction targets: reduce corporate emissions by 40% and community emissions by 15% below the 2014 benchmark by 2023, and reduce both corporate and community emissions by 80% below the 2014 benchmark by 2050. To achieve the City's greenhouse gas reduction commitments and meet our obligations to the Covenant of Mayors, Administration is preparing a Climate Change Mitigation Business Plan, which will directly outline how the City of Saskatoon can meet their short- and long-term emissions reductions targets.

Engagement and communication with residents and the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) sector will help the City identify the level of interest, knowledge, opportunities, and concern in our community, the outcomes of which will directly influence the development of the Business Plan.

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

Targets, Inventory, Process, Engagement Opportunities

- Create a sense of urgency about the need to respond to climate change – Focus on opportunities, hope, and a vision for the future.
- Communicate our emissions inventory – Provide an accurate picture of 'where we are today'.
- Communicate our targets – Build our community's understanding of why it's important for the City to set community and corporate greenhouse gas targets.
- Start to build our community's level of awareness and understanding on the topics of climate mitigation, climate adaptation, climate change, and sustainability.
- Explain how (and when) we are going to invite residents and the ICI sector to participate in the climate change conversation, priority setting, and action/implementation.
- Encourage stakeholders to get involved in engagement activities. Use the opportunity to educate and use facts to frame the conversations happening in our community.
- Build excitement and celebrate environmental target achievements and initiatives.

Outcomes, Opportunities, Next Steps

- Engage community to help prioritize and refine initiatives.
- Build awareness within the community regarding 'what we heard' during the engagement phase.
- Explain next steps.

Operations & Initiatives – Corporate and Community

- Communicate what we're doing, why we're doing it, how it will impact the community, who will be involved, etc.

- Communicate what people in the community are doing, why they're doing it, etc.
- Explain how climate change efforts connect to everything else (i.e. co-benefits).

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

- **Phase One: Pre-Engagement Campaign (1 month – fall 2017)**
Activities will focus on launching communications. The goal is to prepare the community for change and ask businesses, institutions, industry, and residents to get involved.
- **Phase Two– Support Engagement (1-2 months – winter 2017)**
Communications will relate directly to supporting GHG mitigation engagement activities.
- **Phase Three – Reporting/Data Analysis (1-2 months – winter 2017)**
Gather and analyze data needed to inform future planning. Communications will focus on reporting outcomes, 'what we heard', and how the City plans to continue engagement in the future.

KEY MESSAGES:

- We are seeing real change in our Climate. We are at risk of pushing our climate system toward abrupt, unpredictable, and potentially irreversible changes with highly damaging impacts.
 - We are changing the temperature very fast – by as much as 3-4 degrees C by the end of the century.
 - Let's protect the things we love to do that are affected by Climate Change.
- The sooner WE act, the lower the risk and cost. By making informed choices now, we can reduce risks for ourselves and future generations, and help Saskatoon adapt to climate change.
 - We cannot wait any longer. The time for us to act is now.
 - Initiatives that decrease emissions often also decrease costs, due to decreased consumption. For example, decreasing km's traveled on vehicles causes a decrease in emissions and an immediate costs savings from decreased fuel consumption.
 - Future legislation mandating emissions reduction is anticipated. By reducing emissions now, the City will avoid larger costs and higher risks in the future to comply with regulations.
 - Carbon pricing is a federal program that will come into effect in January, 2018. Services provided to residents that may be affected by carbon pricing will include snow clearing, provision of waste services, and administration costs.
- What we do as a community matters. The fact is, cities are responsible for 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Saskatchewan is also the highest emitter per capita in the country.
- This is a solvable problem. People have responded successfully to other major environmental challenges (acid rain, ozone hole) with benefits greater than costs.
 - It is technically possible to limit global average temperature rise to below 2 degrees C if we peak emissions soon and steadily reduce them.
 - We need to support each other to make this happen.

- It is not about the environment vs the economy. Scientists working with economists believe there are ways to manage the risks of climate change while balancing current and future economic prosperity.
 - Whether we act or do not act on climate change, we will have to spend money. However, the costs of *reacting to* climate change in the future are predicted to be more expensive than the costs of *acting on* climate change now.
 - Let's be proactive. Let's be strategic. Let's solve this problem once and for all. Let's act now.
- Win-Win-Win - Solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have been shown to produce a number of societal, economic, cultural, and environmental co-benefits, including:
 - Economic development.
 - Increases in innovation.
 - Lower consumer and commercial utility bills.
 - Better water, air, and soil quality.
 - Improved land-use planning, development patterns, and strategic regional planning.
 - Improvements to individual and public health.
 - Enhanced community safety, social capital, and community cohesiveness.
 - Increased equity and quality of life benefits.
 - A more accessible city.
 - Quieter environment.
 - More access to natural, recreational, cultural, and educational spaces.
 - Improved protection and enhancement of natural and naturalized areas.
 - Decreased burden on future generations.
- We have work to do - Saskatoon's 2014 greenhouse gas inventory showed an increase of 12% in community emissions since the 2003 greenhouse gas inventory. It is time to reverse that trend.
- We (the City of Saskatoon) are making progress - With projects like route optimization for garbage service, Recovery Park, and Energy Performance Contracting on City Buildings, we have been working to make improvements...but more needs to be done.
- We (the City of Saskatoon) are committed:
 - We've signed on to the Compact of Mayors which means we must do create an Action Plan (Business Plan) and follow through.
 - In June 2017, City Council passed ambitious new greenhouse gas reduction targets of 80% below 2014 levels by 2050, for both the community and City of Saskatoon operations.
 - We are committed to helping you (residents and ICI). We recognize we have a lead and facilitation role to play.
- The Community of Saskatoon is taking action on climate change. Together, we are creating a resilient, low-carbon community with initiatives such as creating infrastructure for active transportation, providing options for waste diversion, and engaging in solar partnerships with community groups.
- Here is how you can get involved / Here is where you can find out more:
 - Engagement tactics
 - Website / online tools

- Climate change conversations.
- Facilitated group discussions.
- No question is too small when it comes to climate change. Ask an expert your climate questions at saskatoon.ca/climatechange.