

Slaney, Marlee (Clerks)

From: City Council
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To: City Council
Subject: Form submission from: Write a Letter to Council

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Date: Tuesday, November 06, 2018
To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name: Peter
Last Name: Prebble
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City: Saskatoon
Province: Saskatchewan
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Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable):
Subject: Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction - Agenda Item 7.2.1
Meeting (if known): Nov 6th Standing Committee on the Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services
Comments:
To: Mayor Charlie Clark and City Council Members on the Standing Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services

Your Worship and Members of Council,

I would like to request the opportunity to comment on agenda item 7.2.1 – Recommendations Report for a Low Emissions Community (Saskatoon's Climate Change Mitigation Business Plan) Award of RFP.

The recommendation before you is to accept the proposal submitted by Sustainability Solutions Group for mapping and modelling work for the Climate Change Mitigation Business Plan. I very much support this work being done, and I support the recommendation to allocate \$100,000 for this purpose.

My concern is not with the recommendation to award the contract, but rather with some of its details. I am also worried that insufficient financial resources are being allocated to climate change reduction work across City departments in the coming year. The City's official target date for a 15% reduction in community-wide emissions is, after all, just 5 years away, and an enormous amount of work needs to be accomplished during that time frame.

I would like to turn for a moment to the City administration's wording in the item before you and seek clarification. If you could refer to the subsection 'Report Highlights' - which summarizes the essence of the \$100,000 report being commissioned, you'll see the following 2 sentences: "Based on what has been identified as an opportunity today, community emissions may be reduced by 6% by 2023. This is short of the target reduction of 15% by 2023; however, further modelling work may reveal additional emissions reduction potential."

That wording and the graph in Appendix A has left me concerned that the bulk of the mapping and modelling work Sustainability Solutions Group is being asked to do will primarily – although not exclusively - focus on strategies that are expected to lead to only a 6% reduction in community-wide GHG emissions by 2023. If that is the case, then I worry that the 15% target for community-wide emissions reduction is being compromised and not being taken seriously enough within many City Hall departments. I hope the Standing Committee will, while approving the \$100,000 contract, ask that City administration refocus its efforts on achieving the full 15% cut in community-wide emissions.

City Council might want to adjust the 2023 target date by a year – to 2024 – to give itself an extra year to achieve its goal – since the planning process seems to be taking longer than I had originally expected, but I

hope nothing will be done to compromise the end goal of a 15% reduction in community-wide emissions within 5-6 years.

Furthermore, I would also like to encourage City Council to set an official 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target for community-wide emissions and make that target align with Canada's national emission reduction pledge under the Paris Climate Agreement. As you know, that pledge would translate into at least a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions at the local level 12 years from now.

The scientific evidence overwhelming supports ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets and the allocation of substantial resources to achieve them. The warnings from the United Nations and from climate scientists are ones of extreme urgency. I would like to see more of that urgency making its way into City of Saskatoon policy documents.

I bring to your attention two recent warnings – one from the prestigious medical journal the Lancet, which recently reported a 46% increase in the frequency of extreme weather events worldwide between the years 2000 and 2016, an alarming trend, that without serious action on emission reduction can be expected to continue rising quickly. The second warning is from last month's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report to the United Nations. The IPCC spells out very clearly the tragic consequences of allowing global average temperature to increase more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. (It has already risen by at least 1 degree Celsius.) IPCC says for example that holding the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C as opposed to 2°C "could reduce the number of people exposed to climate-related risks and susceptible to poverty by up to several hundred million by 2050." It could also "reduce the proportion of the world population exposed to a

climate-change induced increase in water stress by up to 50%..." On the ecological front, it's the difference between preserving some of the world's coral reefs, or having them all destroyed by virtue of ocean warming.

IPCC advises national governments across the globe to target a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 if they wish to avoid the highly undesirable consequences for humanity and the natural world that would come with exceeding a 1.5°C global average temperature increase.

I mention this, because by these standards, the City of Saskatoon's official goal for community-wide emissions reduction is modest indeed. It should not in any way be further weakened or compromised. The focus needs to be on full implementation.

I urge your Standing Committee to clearly signal to all civic departments that GHG emission reduction is to become a top priority for resource allocation in future budget years.

Moreover, as part of preparing to meet the 15% target for reducing community-wide GHG emissions over the next 5-6 years, I urge your Standing Committee to request that high priority be given over the next few months to the preparation of city bylaws aimed at greenhouse gas emission reduction in our community. I hope these could be deliberated on and adopted by Council in 2019. For instance, I would strongly recommend modifications to the City's building code to make Energy Star the basis for all new home construction in Saskatoon. I'm also anxious to see code changes to ensure that all newly constructed rooftops in our city have the load-bearing capacity to handle the extra weight of solar panels (an extra three pounds per square foot) and that all new rooftops are wired so that they can readily accommodate solar installations. I'm pleased to see the Solar Opportunities report coming before Council, and I hope Council will actively consider policies aimed at a rapid

large scale roll-out of solar power in our city.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns.

Sincerely,
Peter Prebble

Attachments:

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
<https://www.saskatoon.ca/node/398/submission/265522>