
From: Bryant, Shellie
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 4:37 PM
To: Thompson, Holly
Subject: FW: Letter to Council on LEC Plan
Attachments: Low Emmisions Community August 2019 .docx

From: Sara Harrison [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: August 19, 2019 9:59 PM
To: Sackmann, Debby <Debby.Sackmann@Saskatoon.ca>
Cc: Kathryn Palmer <[REDACTED]>; Erin Akins <[REDACTED]>; Bryant, Shellie <Shellie.Bryant@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Letter to Council on LEC Plan

Hi Debby,

Please see the attached letter on behalf of SEAC for the August 26 council meeting. We will also submit a request to speak.

Thanks,
Sara

Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee August 2019 – Feedback to City Council on the Low Emissions Community Plan

Supporting the City of Saskatoon in achieving its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction targets is a key priority for the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC). On June 13, 2019, knowing that the *Low Emissions Community Plan* (“the LEC Plan”) would be presented to Council over SEAC’s summer break, SEAC resolved to have our GHG Sub-committee provide feedback. On August 6, 2019 the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities & Corporate Services resolved that the LEC Plan be forwarded to SEAC for feedback. On August 8, 2019 the GHG sub-committee received a presentation from Administration in order to draft and provide feedback to City Council in support of its August 26, 2019 discussion. While we have had limited time to discuss and review the report, we feel strongly about the need to comment on our initial reactions to the plan.

In short, **SEAC strongly supports the recommendations of the LEC Plan**, that community engagement be undertaken to further advance planning and develop implementation strategies for preliminary initiatives; and to invest funds as outlined in 2020 and 2021.

Climate change is a critical issue that must be faced by the residents of Saskatoon, and therefore yourselves as municipal leaders. Scientists have warned that we have limited time left to take “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society”, but that these actions will also have **clear social and economic benefits** to our communities.¹ While many municipalities are calling for radical and drastic change to achieve carbon neutrality in the face of this monumental global challenge, SEAC believes that this LEC Plan presents a realistic and measured approach to carbon emission reduction. The Plan is based on quality data and modelling and presents a sound plan that is tailored to our unique context. It articulates what we believe to be a realistic and feasible roadmap to reducing emissions in our City. Simply put, while ambitious, **this plan is achievable**.

We have heard many comments of concern asking “what’s in this for me?” and “can we really afford this?”. Beyond the climate justifications noted, this plan also presents a compelling vision for economic transformation for Saskatoon, providing a roadmap to:

- **Diversify our local economy and create substantial new employment opportunities** in the neighbourhood of 3,300 jobs per year starting as early as 2022;²
- **Contribute over \$6B in discounted net value to residents generated through almost \$3B in savings per year** by 2050,³ presenting an opportunity to reduce long-term costs for taxpayers. The LEC Plan highlights existing and easily remedied inefficiencies and addressing this waste makes up the first two phases of this plan. While community investment is required over the 30 years period (averaging at \$600M per year) the **initial investments are offset by savings in as little as 10 years**.⁴
- Save the added cost of adaptation (e.g. infrastructure upgrades, pest control, storm damage), as **each dollar spent on mitigation efforts is projected to prevent six**

¹ IPCC, Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments. <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

² LEC Plan, Appendix 3 - Financial Analysis and Marginal Abatement Costs, Employment Costs.

³ LEC Plan, Appendix 3 - Financial Analysis and Marginal Abatement Costs, Capital Investment and Returns.

⁴ LEC Plan, Appendix 3 - Financial Analysis and Marginal Abatement Costs, Capital Investment and Returns.

dollars required on adaptation down the road.⁵ There is no longer debate about our changing climate and the impacts, the costs which are already being borne by the City. If we aren't proactive now, we'll pay more for it later.

From a triple bottom line perspective, the LEC Plan is win-win-win: it benefits our economy, benefits our society and quality of life, and of, course benefits our environment. To flip the perspective, the LEC Plan could be considered a socio-economic improvement plan, with a co-benefit of GHG reduction.

SEAC has five specific recommends that Council should consider:

- 1) The **LEC Plan should be “owned” at the Council and City Manager level** – while all of the 40 actions recommended in the report must be implemented in full in order to meet our long-term GHG reduction targets, implementing this plan is not a “one time” vote. Rather, it will be achieved with repeated prioritization over many years by both Council and Administration. It will take significant coordination and focus to ensure that the 40 actions are progressed, and action should be integrated horizontally and vertically across Administration. A corporate-wide ‘Triple Bottom Line’ tool, which is under development, will also support to keeping the 40 actions ‘front of mind’ for various City Departments. This strong signal of leadership may also have a ‘spillover effect’ to change behaviors in the community given the significance of City of Saskatoon as an employer and the influence as a major contracting entity.
- 2) **Begin detailed planning and stakeholder engagement for the implementation of both the first and second phases of the Low Emissions Community Plan.** We have already fallen short of the initial GHG reduction target for 2023, a target which was set by Council, because we did not take action quickly enough. The path to achieve our long term GHG reduction target has been carefully set, and in order to move the plan forward, long-term actions need planning and progress today. Without momentum in planning and policy development, we risk continuing to miss our goals.
- 3) **Develop a supporting communications strategy that goes beyond engagement for the next steps.** Reward and acknowledge success as a community and provide regular information and messaging so that citizens understand the changes underway. This can't simply be based on “facts and figures” arguments but needs to win the “hearts & minds” of citizens and help us move through the stages of acceptance to change. One such suggestion is to communicate the experience of other communities where items in this plan have been successfully implemented. The LEC Plan presents an opportunity to draw our community together and work collaboratively with our Prairie Sister-Cities, as Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg City Councils have approved very similar plans.
- 4) **Continue to explore and identify funding options** to support the implementation LEC Plan. A variety of new and existing funding sources, grants and tools will be required, and SEAC has previously raised concerns over a lack of consistent funding model for environmental programs. In addition, the triple bottom line framework will support investment in many actions as they are not simply environmental initiatives.
- 5) **Plan periodic updates to the LEC Plan so it remains current** and reflects changing opportunities, technology, political, and social realities over time. We anticipate rapid

⁵ LEC Plan, Appendix 3 - Financial Analysis and Marginal Abatement Costs, The Link between Mitigation & Adaptation Investment (based on data from the National Institute of Building Scientists).

change in this space in the coming years and it is important that this plan not become stale or sit on a shelf.

In closing, **SEAC strongly recommends to Council to proceed with this plan.** We understand that as Councilors, you must consider many viewpoints of concerns and priorities in your decision-making. Although voices of dissent against this plan (or any proposed change to the status quo) are likely to be heard, we encourage you to consider the long-term benefits to our community. Positive results may be observed many years into the future and will possibly occur beyond your own time as a sitting member of Council. We encourage you to keep the big picture in mind as you make your decisions; not only today, but into the future as the LEC Plan is implemented. By progressing this plan today, you have the ability to take the first step that will leave a lasting legacy for your tenure.

We would also like to note that SEAC will have this on our formal committee agenda in September, and we look forward to further discussion within the committee on how we can best advise you as engagement and advancement of this plan continues, and support this important debate. We welcome your suggestions on how we can best support Council in its progress towards an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable Saskatoon.

Kind Regards,
Sara Harrison
Chair SEAC