

DISTRICT OF
OAK BAY

MEMORANDUM TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Andrew Appleton, Councillor
DATE: March 16, 2020
RE: Climate Action Budget Item Recommendations

As reported out at the February 20, 2020 meeting of Committee of the Whole and the March 9, 2020 Council meeting, the Community Climate Action Working Group (CCAWG) has concluded their discussions respecting development of up to five (5) climate action recommendations for Council to consider as part of their strategic planning and budget processes.

The first three climate action recommendations were considered and recommended to be included in the 2020 budget cycle at the February 20, 2020 meeting. These included:

1. Prior to the 2021 budget cycle, direct the Engineering Services Department to develop the concept design, establish funding requirements, and develop a feasibility study for completion of the Oak Bay active transportation network by the end of 2025. Consideration should be given to partnerships with adjacent municipalities and the Capital Regional District.
2. Initiate a neighbourhood engagement program to trigger measurable community initiatives by funding the Coolkit program, at a cost of approximately \$116,000 that is spread over a three year period. The Coolkit program should provide educational opportunities for urban forestry, urban agriculture, and other climate related initiatives.
3. Establish an annual funding program to (1) provide grants to community groups who are undertaking direct climate action activities within Oak Bay; and (2) provide rebates for actions that reduce GHG emissions including, for example, heating systems, electric garden equipment, and ebikes. The rebate program should take into consideration opportunities for partnering with other funding opportunities such as the Capital Regional District, Fortis and BC Hydro.

At their March 3, 2020 meeting, the CCAWG finalized their discussions by confirming the fourth and fifth climate action recommendations, thereby completing the direction provided by Council. The Group did recognize that recommendations 4 and 5 go beyond the scope set out in the CCAWG Terms of Reference*, and particularly timeframe and cost distribution over a longer period, but determined these actions were important for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the community. As such, the two recommendations (4 and 5) outlined in this report are intended to directly address reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

* The Terms of Reference for the CCAWG indicated that climate recommendations identified for the 2020 – 2022 budget cycle should take into consideration impacts on the District's financial resources and staff resources.

Recommendation 4

Create two separate programs and associated policies to accelerate GHG and energy reductions for the retrofit and adaptation of existing buildings, and for new building construction.

Recommendation 4 is intended to increase energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both new and existing housing stock. Programs that address **new** housing stock could include initiatives such as implementing higher levels of the BC Energy Step Code, developing an

informational program promoting available rebates and incentives for homeowners, or developing an expedited building permit program.

Actions that focus on **existing** housing stock are more difficult to define. All renovations and retrofits to existing homes are subject to the standards set out in the BC Building Code; and the District has no authority to increase these standards to achieve greater energy efficiency or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. However, through the CleanBC program, by 2024 the Province will be implementing new standards that will result in future upgrades to existing buildings bringing them up to modern efficiency standards. The details of these standards are not yet available.

Because new standards will be in place within the next few years, some actions that could be undertaken by the District include, as with new housing, developing an informational program advising homeowners of rebates or incentives that are available. For example, the program could identify rebates for electrical service upgrades, heat pump installation, furnace replacement or hot water system upgrades.

Funding and Staffing Resources

Without a specific program identified, including any identifiable timelines for implementation, the ability to provide an accurate assessment of the staff or financial resources required is not available. Council could provide direction to staff to provide an estimate of resources required dependent upon the desired program.

Recommendation 5

Implement programs and policies to double transit usage within the next five years through initiatives that connect to the housing framework and housing policy; and through a four month trial period to provide free bus passes to youth in partnership with other agencies.

Recommendation 5 involves two distinct concepts around promoting and increasing transit usage. The broader program looks at increasing transit usage in Oak Bay over the next five years through a series of initiatives, including the Housing Framework (ie. location and density of housing stock), active transportation, and advocacy and partnership with other organizations such as local schools and BC Transit.

The second concept embedded in the recommendation involves implementation of a four month trial program to provide free bus passes to youth within the community. Through this initiative, the District would explore partnering with the City of Victoria to purchase additional bus passes from the City. The intent of this proposal is to include this in the 2020 budget; however, it could also be included in the 2021 budget cycle.

Funding and Staffing Resources

Undertaking this program would involve staff resources; and costs are variable depending upon rollout of the program. For example, if Council chose to purchase bus passes for all eligible youth, monthly costs for passes are estimated at \$33,076*. Potential costs could be reduced if a limited number of passes were instead made available, or if the District could enter into partnerships with other organizations to share the costs of the program.

* *Statistics Canada census population for 2016 indicates a population of 2815 for youth between the ages of 5 and 19.*

In its entirety, the CCAWG developed a series of 14 draft recommendations. These draft recommendations were then used to finalize the five climate action recommendations for consideration by Council, with some amalgamation of ideas where there were direct linkages (see Figure 1). While the full list is not incorporated into the final five recommendations, the CCAWG did indicate that all 14 recommendations are of importance and should be kept on record for future initiatives.

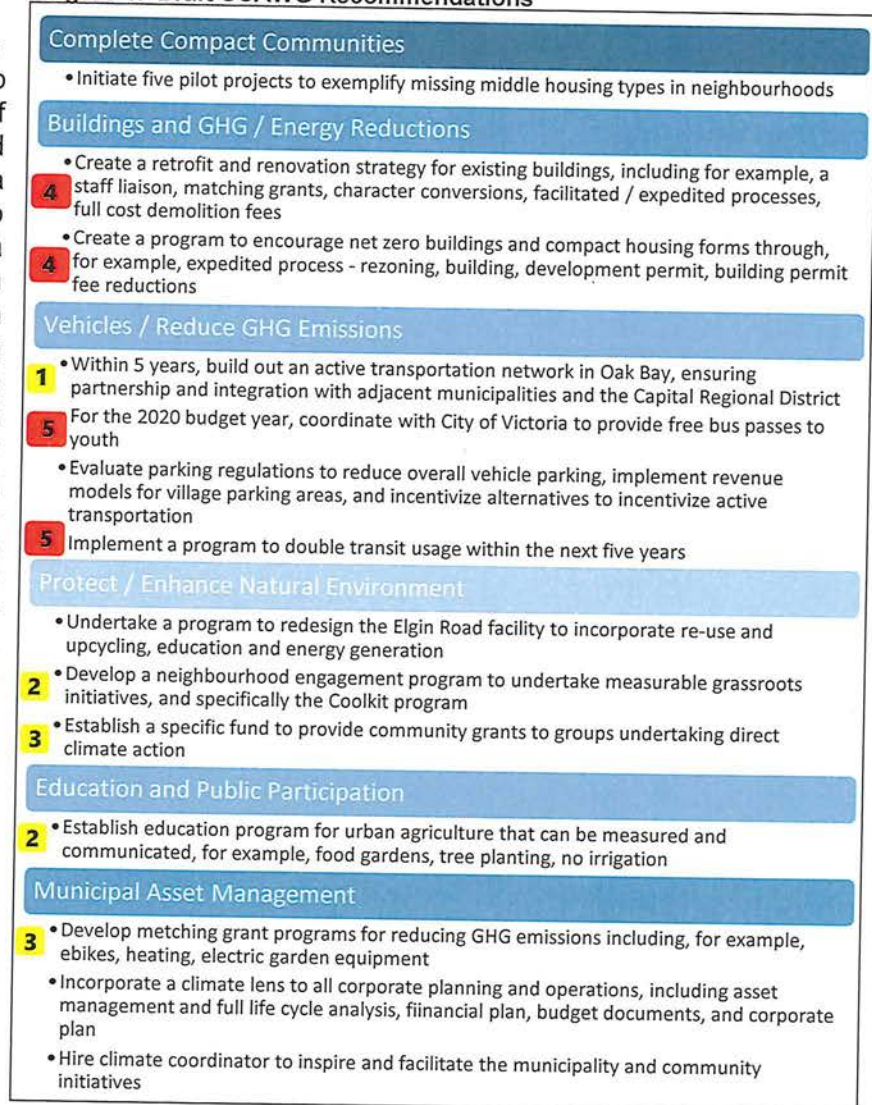
Overarching Principles

The Community Climate Action Working Group (CCAWG) indicated that one of the most important and fundamental components of a climate action program is to ensure that the District plays a fundamental leadership role in impacting climate change. In addition to the five recommended actions, the Group recommended District place utmost importance on demonstrating leadership with respect to climate action by *incorporating a climate lens to all corporate planning and operations, including asset management and full life cycle analysis, financial plan, budget documents, and corporate plan, which could be integrated into existing operations and future projects by the District.* To accomplish this and comprehensively manage climate action initiatives, and recognizing the District's limited staff capacity, the CCAWG determined that as a foundational principle the District should create a new staff position for a climate

coordinator to comprehensively address climate change initiatives. It was suggested this position be used to facilitate municipal operations and community initiatives through, for example, operational activities, educational opportunities and partnership building.

Council recently received a staff report outlining a multi year human resources plan, which will also review current and anticipated staffing needs for the District. Depending upon how Council wishes to proceed, the proposal to introduce a Climate Coordinator position could be considered as part of the current budget cycle or reviewed through the human resource process as identified.

Figure 1. Draft CCAWG Recommendations

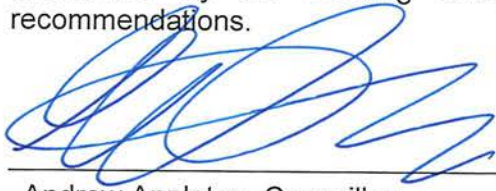


Next Steps

Council recently reaffirmed their 2017 Protocol for Proposed New Initiatives / Special Projects. Under that protocol, where a new special project or initiative is being proposed by Council, Council committed to providing the Chief Administrative Officer an opportunity to formally report back on the staff, budgetary and work plan implications of the proposed new initiative. Should Council wish to move forward with either recommendations 4 or 5, staff could be requested to provide additional information on the process and resources required. This would help determine the full impact on staff, service levels, and budget. Alternatively, Council could have these items considered at the next strategic priority setting session.

Members of the Community Climate Action Working Group (CCAWG) did express a desire to have Council consider these recommendations as part of their current budget process at the March 12, 2020 meeting. However, given the timeline between the March 3rd CCAWG meeting and the March 12th budget discussions, and with staff capacity focussed on budget preparation and reporting, staff advised it was not possible to meet this target. However, should Council wish to incorporate recommendations 4 and 5 into the current year operations, it is still possible to reprioritize approved funding or amend the financial plan bylaw if necessary.

Finally, as per the Community Climate Action Working Group Terms of Reference, a final report will be submitted to Council to describe the overall process and contextual discussions undertaken by the Working Group, and to formally present the five climate action recommendations.



Andrew Appleton, Councillor
Chair, Community Climate Action Working Group

Attach 1 - CCAWG Draft Minutes, March 3, 2020



MINUTES
OAK BAY COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION
WORKING GROUP
HELD TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020 AT 5:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL HALL, 2167 OAK BAY AVENUE

MEMBERS PRESENT

Pam Copley
Patrick Frey
Virginia Holden
Michael Low

Kris Nichols
Caroline Smart
Councillor Andrew Appleton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kristina Leach
Tim Taddy

STAFF PRESENT

Deborah Jensen, Manager of Planning
Krista Mitchell, Building and Planning Clerk
Bruce Anderson, Director of Building & Planning
Dan Horan, Director of Engineering Services

OTHER

Councillor Tara Ney

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm.

2. Adoption of Minutes from February 4, 2020

It was moved and seconded that the minutes from February 4, 2020 be adopted.
The motion was carried.
None opposed.

3. Approval of Agenda and Late Items

The agenda was approved as presented.

The motion was carried.
None opposed.

4. Public Participation

David Blacoe, Oak Bay resident, stated that he hoped the two remaining recommendations have a stronger message to the community about reducing GHG emissions, such as building codes, EV charging, solar power and improved insulation.

Andrea Careless, Oak Bay resident, stated that the first three recommendations are great, however they are missing strong GHG reduction recommendations, which can be noted in the final two recommendations. She also referenced the Oak Bay Climate Force Facebook group.

Pam Woodland, Oak Bay resident, thanked the CCAWG members for their hard work and persistence. She read from a message from Gary MacDougall that Council should adopt the one planet living guidelines that would align with the Coolkit initiative program, and the need to regenerate the planet if we want a future for our children.

Pam Woodland, Oak Bay resident, stated that the Coolkit program would provide resilience in the community, allowing a connection between food and community members, and would like to see Council embrace Earth Day on April 22, 2020.

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CCAWG members commended the residents who have attended their meetings, as they are part of a broader regional initiative named South Island Community Action Network, and are committed to climate action.

5. New Business

None.

6. Old Business

a) Finalize Climate Action Recommendations

A. Appleton, Chair, advised the Group needs to select the final two recommendations, and that the first three draft recommendations were brought forward to the Committee of the Whole. He noted that Council asked for additional information on the Coolkit program, which will be presented at the March 9th Council meeting, and that the first three recommendations have been included in the 2020 draft budget process.

CCAWG Comments

CCAWG members clarified that Council has received and included the first three recommendations in the draft budget process as presented, and if they are not finalized in this cycle, they could be brought forward for the next budget cycle. They also stated that some of the recommendations are not short term items, but are intended to reflect OCP policy and climate priorities in the long term.

D. Horan confirmed that the five year financial plan, starting in 2021, is to include an annual \$200,000 for active transportation initiatives, and staff will be reviewing the active transportation program to determine what is achievable.

D. Jensen commented that Dr. Sheppard, a professor at the University of British Columbia, will be in attendance at the March 9th Council meeting to discuss the Coolkit program. She also advised that tonight's CCAWG meeting is to develop the final two recommendations from the initial 14 recommendations.

CCAWG members noted that the parking bylaw has been troublesome for years, and out of alignment with the OCP vision and policy. They noted the importance of existing and new housing stock, with strategies to effectively retrofit, and the necessity for a leadership model that works toward greater sustainability; and commented that GHG emissions from buildings represent 40% of GHG emissions from the community.

B. Anderson advised the District has implemented the Energy Step Code, which is currently at Step 3, and Step 5 would achieve net zero for new buildings.

D. Jensen noted that, through the CleanBC program, the Province will introduce a program for retrofitting existing buildings by 2024 to achieve greater energy efficiency.

CCAWG members recommended that two separate programs and associated policies be created to accelerate greenhouse gas and energy reductions for the retrofit and adaptation of existing buildings, and for new building construction.

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A. Appleton commented that the fifth recommendation pertains to increase transit usage in the next 5 years, as personal transportation is a major GHG contributor.

CCAWG member noted the need for staff resources to provide an advocacy role on behalf of the District to work with BC Transit to improve transit in the community, and to gather data from BC Transit to provide measurable. They also noted, that in order to achieve the goal of increased transit usage in the community, the following strategies could be utilized:

- housing density needs to be built to maintain and increase transit users;
- housing density should be located around transit corridors;
- need to build compact transit oriented communities;
- partner with BC Transit;
- act on policy transit as it links to OCP policy for complete streets;
- consider a pilot program to share the cost of bus passes for youth.

D. Horan noted that, if advocacy with BC Transit is a priority, it could be challenging for District staff given existing resources and capacity.

D. Jensen reconfirmed that mandate of the Working Group with respect to consideration of staff resources and budget. She also advised the City of Victoria has had limited success for their free youth bus program, and there would be a cost of approximately \$88,000 to the District to fund a partial program for youth.

CCAWG members recommended the District implement programs and policies to double transit usage within the next five years through initiatives that connect to the housing framework and housing policy; and through a four month trial period to provide free bus passes to youth in partnership with other agencies.

CCAWG members noted that introducing a climate lens to the District and employing a sustainability coordinator to manage the climate initiatives could be an overarching guiding principle of the recommendations, given that in the longer term work needs to be underway to fully implement climate action into all aspects of municipal operations and the community. District leadership and staff resourcing should be foundational elements that guide future work on climate action.

7. Information Items

None

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Certified as fair and accurate:


Chair


Recorder

District of Oak Bay | 2020 03 03 ccawg minutes final