Draft EAC Report to Council
Following Up on Council's Climate Emergency Declaration and Associated EAC Mandates

In its Resolution 2020-20 of 13 January 2020, Council requested the EAC, working with staff:

(a) In the context of its mandated review of the Environmental Strategic Plan, to give priority consideration to that Plan's climate change-related elements, and in so doing to consider also the 2010 Community Climate Action Plan and climate change-related elements of the 2017 OCP.

(b) To recommend updated emission reduction targets, aligned with targets established by Metro Vancouver in July 2019, and consistent with current provincial and federal goals and the latest IPCC work.

(c) To recommend steps, including appropriate public consultation measures, to ensure that the City's climate change goals, policies and actions are updated and consolidated into the Official Community Plan as part of the ongoing OCP review exercise.

Over the past year, the COVID19 crisis and demands of other priorities precluded initiation of the strategy review envisaged in *subparagraph (a)*. The COVID19 crisis also led Council to reduce the scope of the OCP Review exercise cited in resolution *subparagraph (c).* Notwithstanding these unavoidable disruptions, the need for effective action to address the challenges of climate change has not abated. This reality was underlined in Council's recently revised Strategic Priorities (2021-22) which cast environmental stewardship as the second of six broad goals and declare reducing GHG emissions a "high priority".

Updating the OCP's obsolete GHG emission targets -- as envisaged in *subparagraph (b)* of Resolution 2020-20 -- could be an important first step in refocussing attention on this priority.

An update of the City's emission reduction targets is long overdue. In 2017, the current OCP committed to updating the targets within two years. White Rock's current target -- to reduce emissions to 10% below 2007 levels by 2020, 50% by 2050 -- was adopted with the 2010 Community Climate Action Plan, which proposed a "soft sell" starting path, considerably less ambitious than the then-extant provincial targets (which have themselves been substantially altered since then). This target is thus badly out of date and out of synch with current higher level targets and goals of relevance to White Rock. Specifically:

- At the <u>global</u> level, Canada is party to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to well below 2, preferably 1.5, degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.
- <u>Nationally</u>, Canada committed in 2016 under the Paris Agreement to reduce national emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. In 2019, Canada declared that its national reductions would exceed the 2030 target and that it would achieve zero net emissions by 2050.
- <u>Provincially</u>, BC's 2018-legislated target is: 40% below 2007 levels by 2030, 60% by 2040, 80% by 2050. In 2020, an "interim" target was set at 16% below 2007 levels by 2025.
- At the <u>regional</u> government level (where BC law requires the setting of targets): In 2019, Metro Vancouver adopted the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, with an interim target of 45% below 2010 levels by 2030.

As at the regional government level, BC law requires municipal OCPs to *"include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions ... proposed with respect to achieving those targets." [Sec. 473(3) Local Government Act]* However, experience since the 2010 adoption of White Rock's current targets calls into question the utility and feasibility of setting and monitoring independent community-wide targets for sub-regional entities, especially small municipalities like White Rock. BC municipalities can and do provide meaningful inventories of "corporate" (city operations) emissions; but the Province appears to have abandoned the regular compilation of community-wide inventories around 2012. Consequently, it may be more realistic and practical to express any updated targets for White Rock in terms of a recognition and endorsement of higher-level government targets and a commitment to action within the City's jurisdiction and capabilities to contribute to the pursuit of those higher level goals.

Against this background, **the EAC recommends that Council take the earliest opportunity to introduce the following updated language for OCP Policy 12.5.1**, if possible as part of the package of amendments to be considered in the current OCP review exercise:

> *The City of White endorses the current GHG emission reduction targets of the Governments of Canada, BC and Metro Vancouver, in particular the shared commitment to achieve net zero emissions, or carbon neutrality, by 2050. The City will undertake all possible measures within its jurisdiction and capabilities to contribute to the realization of these targets, including through the achievement of carbon neutrality in its corporate operations by 2030 and by actively promoting the reduction of community-wide GHG emissions in White Rock.*
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> *To these ends, concrete plans will be developed and steps taken in all spheres enumerated under BC's annual climate action reporting requirements, ie: broad planning, building and lighting, energy generation, greenspace protection and enhancement, solid waste management, transportation, water and wastewater management, and climate change adaptation efforts.*

Adoption of this statement and its early inclusion in the OCP could set the scene for more concrete steps toward strengthening White Rock's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in the year ahead, including EAC collaboration with staff to develop sector-specific plans in parallel with the preparation of the City's next CARIP report.