

WHITE ROCK CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY: A POSSIBLE NEAR-TERM APPROACH

Council Resolution 2020-20 (see p.10 of [Council Minutes 13 January 2020](#)) highlighted the threats climate change poses for regional ecosystems, city infrastructure and the well-being of White Rock's citizens and mandated the EAC to conduct a full review of the City's climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

In the context of the COVID19 crisis and demands of other priorities on the committee and on scarce staff resources, this mandate has received only limited attention over the past two years. In March 2021, the EAC proposed updating the City's official GHG reduction targets as well as strengthening standards for EV charging facilities in new buildings. Anticipating that such measures would require amendments to outdated provisions of the City's OCP, Council referred them to staff for a "possible timeline of when and how it can be done (acknowledging it may not occur until after this term)" (see *Resolution 2021-169*, [Council Minutes 29 March 2020](#)). On 4 March 2022, the EAC recommended that Council expeditiously strengthen EV charging facility requirements through amendments to the Zoning Bylaw.

Beyond the foregoing, it has not been possible to initiate a comprehensive climate strategy review of the type Council envisaged back in January 2020. Little time remains for the Committee to do justice to this task in its current tenure.

Despite these unavoidable disruptions and constraints, the "climate emergency" recognized by Council over two years ago has not abated. Recent extreme weather events and the latest science have rather demonstrated the growing seriousness of this challenge. The urgent need for stronger sustained action has been underscored in major policy pronouncements from all higher levels of government.

Against this background, the EAC could consider preparing a series of recommendations representing practical steps that could be adopted in the immediate-to-near-term:

- These might include some "ripe-for-action" policy measures consistent with directions that have been set by higher levels of government and adopted by other BC municipalities. The attached notes (Annex A) flag some possible such issues in the Buildings, Transportation and Solid Waste sectors, taking into account the latest relevant material from Metro Vancouver, the province, and the federal government.*
- At the same time, it is evident that sustained, proactive attention from City officials and elected representatives will be crucial to the effectiveness of White Rock's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts going forward. The attached Annex B thus proposes some organizational recommendations to encourage and facilitate the ongoing engagement of staff and Council on this issue.

[* Metro Vancouver's [Climate 2050 Strategic Framework](#) (July 2019) and [Climate 2050 Roadmaps and Discussion Papers](#) (2020-22); the province's [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#) (October 2021); Canada's [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan](#) (March 2022)]

ANNEX A: ISSUES FOR POSSIBLE NEAR TERM ACTION?

1. BUILDINGS

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The [BC Energy Step Code](#) provides a path for local governments to introduce energy efficiency standards above and beyond those in the BC Building Code. The procedure for introducing the Step Code is laborious, requiring a notice period and consultations with builder and extensive training of City staff ([Step Code Policy Guide](#), [Step Code Best Practices for Local Governments](#)). Surrey formally initiated that procedure in December 2017, and has to date adopted two zoning bylaw amendments gradually bringing residential building requirements up to STEP 3 of 5 and commercial buildings up to STEP 2 of 3, with plans for further progressive amendments in 2023-26 ([Surrey STEP Code Progress](#)).

The Step Code does not include GHG emission limits. (Local governments may not impose emissions limits restricting the use of fossil fuels in new buildings; many high-efficiency homes in the region are thus being built with natural gas heating emitting high levels of GHG emissions.) Under the *Roadmap to 2030*, B.C. will add a new carbon pollution standard to the BC Building Code, to make all new buildings zero carbon by 2030. New regulations will be phased in in 2024/27/30. The province also promises support for local governments to set carbon pollution standards for new buildings via an opt-in regulation. The federal government has also announced plans for a new Net Zero Building Code Acceleration Fund to accelerate adoption and implementation of highest performance tiers of national model energy codes.

Given this state of flux and the complexity of the current Step Code process, the question arises whether a recommendation for City action on this matter makes sense at this stage or would even be viable. Might there be any way of short-circuiting the procedure and associating White Rock with Surrey's process? To consider any possible EAC recommendation, we will at a minimum need an update from staff on where the City stands with its preparations to formally initiate the Step Code process.

[Excerpt from EAC Minutes 4 March 2021: The Manager of Building and Bylaw Enforcement (T.Welsh) provided a presentation on the British Columbia Energy Step Code.

- BCBC 9.36 Energy Step Code was made available as an option to builders in 2017, comprising of five (5) Steps. The Province has indicated mandating Step 3 in 2022. The Province has a goal of achieving a mandate of Step 5 (Net Zero Construction) in 2032.
- White Rock plans to approach the adoption with the following: An Online Builder Survey; Internal staff review and assessment; Survey of adjacent municipalities; Consultation with Building Safety Standards Branch; and Combine results to develop adoption strategy.
- White Rock's timeline to achieve a higher step (Step 3) is by 2022.
- There is a possibility of looking into collaborating with other municipalities.]

EXISTING BUILDINGS/RETROFITS [Buildings cont'd]

Existing buildings are a much larger source of ghg emissions than new buildings. Placing ghg limits on retrofits is viewed by provincial and regional authorities as a potential game-change. The BC Government is thus considering a code for alterations including energy efficiency, earthquake and health and safety standards, to be introduced in 2024. This code would follow and harmonize with the introduction of a Government of Canada model code for retrofits in 2022. In this context there appears to be little scope if any for practical short term recommendations regarding existing buildings.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Under the *Roadmap to 2030*, the Province will establish zero carbon requirements for new public sector buildings by 2027, beginning with performance standards by 2023. All government procurement and spending and funding decisions will also be screened for climate outcomes under the *Roadmap to 2030*. *At the federal level*, the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program promises \$1.5 billion support for retrofits, repairs or upgrades, and new builds to community buildings including community centres, sport facilities, and cultural spaces. The City has no major building plans for the near future and so there appears to be no scope for a specific proposal beyond a possible generic recommendation for the City to keep abreast of all available funding opportunities going forward.

2. TRANSPORTATION

CORPORATE FLEETS, INCLUDING NON-ROAD EQUIPMENT

The latest provincial (*CleanBC Roadmap to 2030*) and federal (*2030 Emissions Reduction Plan*) policy pronouncements signal ambitious new programs and funding to promote an accelerated shift to the use of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) in all economic sectors including local government.

- The CleanBC Go Electric program includes rebate programs accessible to local governments for light duty, commercial and specialty vehicles.
- Clean BC's [Go Electric Fleets program](#) offers advisory services and rebates for management tools and infrastructure upgrades including charging stations.
- The [CleanBC Communities Fund](#) (CCF) offers grants to local governments for the development of charging infrastructure.

Metro Vancouver's *Clean Air Plan 2021* urges the adoption of ZEV-first procurement policies in regional and local government, as well as the transitioning of non-road equipment to zero carbon emissions. The province says it will establish ZEV-first purchase policies for public-sector fleets, with ZEVs accounting for 100% light-duty vehicle acquisitions by 2027.

Possible Recommendations? [Transportation/Corporate Fleets and Equipment cont'd]

- Encourage early proactive review of all available provincial and federal rebates and incentives for shifting to zero- and low-carbon equipment: don't miss the boat at a time when such programs are being significantly bolstered with new available funds.
- Adopt zero- and low-carbon-first procurement policies for City fleets and other equipment. In this respect, it will be important to ensure any proposal is defensible in the context of any applicable broader policies or rules regarding procurement. There are no apparent provincial laws/regulations specifically governing local government procurement, but general legal and policy principles such as taxpayer value, transparency, inter-provincial trade agreements do come into play, and figure in White Rock's current [Procurement Policy 301](#). The *City of Vancouver's Procurement Policy* addresses such considerations with the following language: *City departments and agencies "will give preference where feasible, to products and services that represent a non-carbon alternative, are carbon neutral or that minimize greenhouse gas emissions and thereby contribute to reducing the[ir] carbon footprint".*

PROMOTING CHARGING FACILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

Metro's [Climate 2050 Transportation Roadmap](#) encourages local governments to promote expanded access to electric vehicle charging in buildings and to lobby for provincial "Right-to-Charge" legislation as well as code requirements for new or substantially renovated buildings to be wired for electric vehicle chargers. The *CleanBC Roadmap to 2030* includes a provincial commitment to bring in "right-to-charge" legislation, allowing more people to install EV charging infrastructure in strata and apartment buildings.

Recommendation?: On 4 March 2022, the EAC recommended that Council expeditiously strengthen EV charging facility requirements through amendments to the Zoning Bylaw, based on EAC's March 2021 recommendation.

3. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

The [CleanBC Plastics Action Plan](#) includes actions to use less plastic, including approval of plastic bans in five communities, expanded beverage container recycling and regulation of single-use plastic items. In October 2021, the province gave municipalities authority to regulate specific single-use plastics ([BC Government: Municipal Regulation of Single-Use Plastics](#)) and in January 2022 issued the [Local Government Guide for Bylaws Regulating Single-use Plastics](#).

Recommendation?: Consider a bylaw drawing on the latest provincial guidance and bylaws adopted in Surrey and other jurisdictions?

OTHER SOLID WASTE ISSUES/MEASURES?? [Solid Waste management cont'd]

- Disposal Ban Programs support and expand the recycling and reuse of a range of products, including paper, plastic, metals and organics (food scraps, yard waste, and wood waste), reducing emissions associated with solid waste disposal.
- Behaviour change campaigns create awareness of the amount of waste generated by households and the associated environmental and economic impacts, and encourage changes in behaviours to mitigate those impacts. In some cases, the campaign provides ideas for preventing waste (e.g., [Love Food Hate Waste](#); Think Thrice; [Create Memories, Not Garbage](#)). Food Recovery Programs collect safe and nutritious surplus foods from food processors, distributors, grocery stores and food services and deliver them to small businesses, food banks, and community organizations. Effective food recovery programs reduce food waste and emissions while feeding people ([Food Mesh](#), [Food Stash](#), Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Second Harvest).
- Demolition recycling requirements set minimum recycling and reuse requirements for demolition and construction projects, which help maintain the carbon stored in construction lumber (Coquitlam, [New Westminster](#), City of North Vancouver, Port Moody, [Surrey](#), Richmond, [Vancouver](#), West Vancouver). Does White Rock have any regulations in this area?
- General recommendation to prioritize emission reductions and other climate solutions in rollout of multi-residential collection plans???

ANNEX B: ORGANIZING FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Resolution 2020-20 called on staff to keep Council apprised of external programs and resources available to inform and support the City's climate change efforts. With both the provincial and federal governments having recently announced new mechanisms to support local government climate initiatives, this is a particularly opportune time to canvas the opportunities offered by such facilities. (See, for instance, BC's *CleanBC Roadmap to 2030*, the [CleanBC Communities Fund](#) and [The B.C. Community Climate Funding Guide](#), as well as Canada's *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan* and Low Carbon Economy Fund).

Council Resolution 2020-20 also directed staff to ensure that climate change considerations are mainstreamed into decision-making and operations across all City departments. The introduction of climate change impact assessments in all reports and recommendations to Council has been a significant step in that direction. To reinforce the mainstreaming prerogative, additional measures should be considered to promote systematic and sustained focus on the climate change priority in ongoing policy and operational processes.

Finally, Resolution 2020-20 also requested staff to keep Council regularly informed of challenges and progress in addressing the challenges of climate change, including through briefings on the City's annual reports to the Province's Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP). While the province has cancelled CARIP and is in the process of replacing it with new municipal funding arrangements, it remains crucial that the Mayor and Council stay informed and play an active role in driving the City's climate change efforts.

Against this background, the EAC might consider the following draft recommendations:

- 1. The EAC recommends that priority be given to reviewing and taking maximum advantage of available provincial, national and extra-governmental resources to inform and support the City's climate change efforts.**
- 2. The EAC recommends that Council and Management take additional measures to promote systematic and sustained focus on the climate change priority in ongoing policy and operational processes. Such measures might include designating a staff climate change policy coordinator and establishing an inter-departmental climate change policy committee. Such steps need not entail additional costs, but considering the importance of this priority, the Committee urges that modest incremental resources be allocated to it.**
- 3. The EAC recommends that Council be kept regularly apprised of developments regarding the City's climate change challenges and responses and that Council conduct, on an annual basis, a public discussion of a staff report on the City's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.**
