

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr20_2021

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Environmental Framework Update

Report Purpose

To provide Priorities Committee with an update on the draft Environmental Framework.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Goal 2 - Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

Goal 5 - Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships

Report

It has been 10 years since approval of the Environmental Sustainability Framework (2009). Throughout 2020, we have reflected upon and re-examined our environmental priorities. With the foundation of the previous framework and ensuring relevance with current issues and trends, several new priorities have been incorporated into the updated Environmental Framework (2021). Topic areas have been expanded from five to six and include air, water, land, biological diversity, waste, and energy. Each topic area has clear outcomes and specific objectives identified. Each objective is then manifested by innovative practices, supportive tools, and strategic initiatives. It became apparent during our research last year that we have been actively, but not collectively, working towards some significant environmental improvements for our community. In order to “tell our story” accurately and robustly, it is important to document and recognize the work to date and realize new initiatives to continue down the path we’ve set.

Our six topic area outcomes are:

1. Airshed sustains healthy ecosystems and healthy citizens
2. Watershed sustains healthy ecosystems and healthy citizens
3. Land planning, use, and management sustains healthy ecosystems and healthy citizens
4. Biodiversity sustains healthy ecosystems and healthy citizens
5. Waste management protects healthy ecosystems and healthy citizens
6. Reducing energy use, committing to energy efficiency, and embracing renewable energy sources sustains healthy air, water, biological diversity, and nutrient cycling and is the foundation for healthy citizens

Council and Committee History

January 26, 2021	Priorities Committee received information on Reducing our Carbon Footprint
July 7, 2020	Council approved a greenhouse gas target of achieving a 15% decrease from 2018 levels by 2030 for municipal buildings (2020/263)
June 30, 2009	Council approved the Environmental Sustainability Framework

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr20_2021

Other Impacts**Policy:** n/a**Legislative/Legal:** n/a**Interdepartmental:** All**Master Plan/Framework:** Environmental Sustainability Framework**Communication plan**

A communication and public engagement plan for the Environmental Framework has been developed with support from Corporate Communications. The Environmental Framework and the update is intended for the organization; therefore, the primary audience is internal (administration and elected officials).

Interdepartmental administrative reviews focussed on challenges and opportunities since 2009, which have been captured through a series of workshops with department representatives. Six internal workshops were completed between November 2020 and January 2021. Over 40 department representatives participated. Based on that input, a draft Environmental Framework was developed and submitted to all department representatives on February 2, 2021.

External engagement focussed on workshops with municipal representatives from the Capital Region Municipal Sustainability Group (January 29, 2021), representatives of non-governmental organizations (February 18, 2021), and the Youth Advisory Committee (scheduled for April 12, 2021).

A mixed-topic survey offered through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel was completed in October 2020. Several questions related to the Environmental Framework outcomes were presented. 546 people responded (76% urban, 21% rural, 3% work here live elsewhere), of those, 50% were not aware of the 2009 Environmental Sustainability Framework. The top three environmental concerns were air quality and emissions, loss of green space and urban sprawl, and waste and plastics.

A full survey offered through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel was completed in March 2021. While the first mixed-topic survey was fairly high level, this full survey addressed each topic area in greater detail, with the intent to identify strategic initiatives that may be priorities for the community. 617 people responded (65% urban, 33% rural, 2% work here live elsewhere). The top strategic initiatives of interest were air quality microsensor deployments, water conservation, biodiversity awareness, and carbon footprint reduction activities.

Enclosure

- 1 Environmental Framework update presentation