

2022 Committee Priorities

Executive Summary

The urgent need for Edmonton to take action to decarbonize becomes clearer each day. The latest AR6 Working Group 2 IPCC Report report warns that the climate is warming faster than previously understood. We have less time and fewer options to adapt. The report also highlights the unique opportunities cities have to advance climate resilient development. While new technologies and corporate commitments can help reduce global warming, the goals will not be achieved without immediate government policy and infrastructure investment decisions.

The Energy Transition Climate Resilience Committee (ETCRC) reminds Council that all decisions are climate decisions. Mitigation and adaptation both need to be considered.

The Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan is a bold and ambitious plan - years in the making. Now the hard work begins.

Decades of unaffordable carbon emissions risk being locked in if Policy and Infrastructure decisions are not made from a GHG perspective.

Bold Climate Action Has Never Been More Important.

2022 Committee Priorities

1. The Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan is a comprehensive framework for what needs to be done to meet our commitment to a 1.5C emissions future. Good progress has been made on many fronts in laying the policy groundwork for eventual emissions reductions. Some actions are starting. This work needs to be accelerated, but this great plan and vision will amount to nothing if we don't commit the resources needed to implement.

2. Transformation: Culture Change, the Carbon Budget, and Metrics. Culture change, carbon budgeting and metrics are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They need to advance together and reach critical thresholds to be effective. A transformation on the scale required by the climate emergency will require extraordinary leadership and continuing commitment of resources. The alternative is far more expensive.

a. Culture Change: The City Council has signaled its support for a cultural shift that makes every decision a climate decision. It must become the personal responsibility of all City staff, especially senior management, to ensure that the carbon accounting framework delivers measured results, and is not a superficial administrative procedure. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this cultural shift across all city departments. If we do not get buy-in from all City employees, the meaningful change will simply not happen. We need to see a real cultural shift from the top, down to every City employee. This will be difficult. Old habits die hard. This message will need to be constantly reinforced - at every level.

This culture change must include the shifts in thinking that are needed to make the transition a just one. As the world transitions to a low carbon future, we have the opportunity and responsibility to **implement changes that reduce instead of exacerbate societal inequalities and vulnerabilities**. This must start by using energy efficiency as a jumping off point to eliminate energy poverty, but it must go beyond that. The City has a long way to go to meet community expectations around energy justice. To do business differently means working with a range of communities and also engaging Indigenous communities and nations as equal partners and knowledge holders. Energy justice must be built into all decision-making processes in Edmonton.

The City's Indigenous Framework is an important foundational tool to be used by Administration and Council in approaching just and equitable work. All of us can take personal accountability for the seven commitments- adopting Wahkohtowin in all we do.

b. Carbon Budget: Vague targets are unlikely to be met. We need to measure what we must manage. We were pleased to see City Council's support for City Administration's plan to develop a Carbon Budget Office. By the fall of 2021, Administration made a commitment that a baseline carbon budget be developed. In the first half of 2022 a carbon lens is to be applied to create the next four-year budget (2023-2026). Beyond that a carbon budget is to be fully incorporated into the budgeting process. An internal task force was to be developed to guide Edmonton's transition to a carbon neutral city. The task force will have access to confidential information that our committee cannot access, and will have the resources to dig into the details of the City's plans and actions. We look forward to working with the task force.

Near-term targets with regular reporting to ensure Edmonton achieves its **2025 target of a 35% reduction** remains a gap urgently needing to be addressed.

c. Metrics: The right metrics will drive emissions reduction through the carbon budget and culture change. And we need to be clear on the reasons for measuring and how and what to measure.

The right metrics are needed to evaluate and rank proposed actions. Also to report on and evaluate progress and make necessary adjustments.

Our committee is tasked by Council to review proposed climate mitigation and adaptation measures and offer opinions on whether they should proceed or not. Too often, in spite of our collective expertise, because of a lack of solid metrics we are forced to rely on qualitative judgments.

City staff at every level are in the same predicament. For the carbon budget to be effective in guiding decisions the right things need to be measured. In large part this will be the cost per tonne of CO₂e avoided, but it needs to go beyond that. Can the measure be dialed to zero or does it achieve a short term reduction leaving the remaining emissions to continue? How soon will the emissions begin? Does or can the measure reduce inequity and social justice?

To do all this, the Planning and Environmental Services department needs more staff and support. Their work so far is nothing less than heroic. Their work on the Edmonton 1.5C climate budget was instrumental in waking us up to the emergency that is slowly rolling over us. It was also foundational to the Action Plan. And now we need much more from them. We need their help and guidance in developing the carbon budget, its metrics and in effecting and monitoring the culture change. We strongly recommend an immediate

cluster-hire of multi-disciplinary resources within this department. Providing them the resources they need is among our highest priorities.

3. High Visibility Early Wins. Engaging citizens and city staff to engage with these transformation changes will go better if the City leads by example. Planning for change is essential, but not inspirational. Successful, tangible projects are needed as beacons of inspiration, hope, and momentum. Tangible early emission reductions are also the gift that keeps on giving.

Our committee will sift through the Action Plan to identify good candidates for accelerated immediate action, will work with Administration to understand practical constraints and feasibility, and will conduct a multi-dimensional analysis based on financial, climate and equity considerations.