



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 12.1.1

**Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee
March 7, 2019**

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Kelly Denty, Director, Planning & Development

-Original Signed-

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 11, 2019

SUBJECT: **Proposed iMatter Climate Inheritance Resolution**

ORIGIN

On October 4, 2018, the following motion of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee was put and passed:

“THAT the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff recommendation report exploring the implications of the proposed Climate Inheritance Resolution on the Municipality, as presented by iMatter Halifax at the October 4, 2018 meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.”

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 34, (3) The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 59, (3) In addition to matters specified in this Act or another Act of the Legislature, the Council may adopt policies on any matter that the Council considers conducive to the effective management of the Municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Await the completion of the Community Energy and Climate Action Plan, prior to adopting emissions reduction targets; and
2. Not consider endorsing the proposed iMatter Climate Inheritance Resolution, until the Community Energy and Climate Action Plan is presented to Council for consideration.

BACKGROUND

The Youth Climate Action Program, a component of the iMatter group, recognizes the magnitude of climate change issues and is a program designed by young people, for young people to lobby various levels of government for aggressive climate policy commitments.¹ At the October 4, 2018 meeting of the ESSC, representatives from iMatter Halifax presented the HRM Climate Action Report Card and proposed a climate resolution, recommending that Regional Council take more aggressive action to combat climate change (Attachment A).

The Climate Inheritance Resolution has three main requests:

1. To commit the municipality to complete a climate action plan for consideration that reduces Halifax's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net zero by 2040 for corporate and community emissions.
2. That Council ensure that there be adequate measures taken to support marginalized communities in adapting to climate change.
3. That Council commits to start the climate action plan detailing the steps necessary to achieve net zero by 2040 within 90 days, and to complete as soon as possible.

Currently, staff are conducting a two-year initiative to develop a comprehensive climate change plan that updates the municipality's corporate and community-wide climate and energy targets and objectives, and defines long-term climate mitigation and adaptation goals, through ongoing collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

The Community Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) was launched in June 2018. An overview of the project was presented to the Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee on November 21, 2018². The CECAP intends to capitalize on HRM's climate change work since 1997 and defines near and long-term objectives, actions and outcomes for energy efficiency, community resilience and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. With regards to mitigation, the CECAP seeks to update and expand the 2007 Community Energy Plan and the Corporate Plan to Reduce GHG Emissions 2012-2020 to encompass community-wide energy and emissions reduction measures out to 2050.

Importantly, the CECAP initiative will rely on the best available science to determine HRM's near- and long-term responses to climate change. Special reports released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change³ and a subsequent summary report released in December 2018 provide warnings in high confidence that the climate-related risks resulting from 1.5°C of global warming will be significant and far-reaching, but undoubtedly less severe than the risks and impacts of 2°C of global warming on Earth's natural and human systems. These reports will be priorities for consideration as the CECAP is drafted. Similarly, consideration of the global scientific community's response to an ever-evolving understanding of global climate change will be fundamental to the relevance and usefulness of the CECAP.

DISCUSSION

Internal and external stakeholder input on the CECAP process and outputs is being collected through a carefully designed and facilitated process during quarterly meetings. The external stakeholders consist of more than 95 individuals, contributing time for review of documents and stakeholder meetings each quarter. iMatter has already been identified as a member of the Community Leadership Team and has attended the first meeting which took place on January 18th of this year.

The balance of the Discussion section of this report is structured around the three portions of the iMatters'

¹ iMatter. Youth Climate Action Program. Accessed on January 11, 2019: <https://www.imatteryouth.org/program/>

² The staff presentation and memorandum provided to the Standing Committee are available here <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/standing-committees/november-1-2018-environment-sustainability-standing-committee>

³ The Special Report and Summary for policymakers can be found here: <https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

Resolution:

1. To Commit the Municipality to achieve net zero emissions by 2040

Members of the Community Leadership Team were requested to contemplate their organizations' emission targets and goals. They were provided with a graph and questionnaire to encourage meaningful, engaged discussions from the outset of the project. The graph (Attachment B) acts as a starting point for discussions and an opportunity to provide clarity on the goals of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. As the stakeholder engagement progresses, a better understanding of how to move forward together, as a community, towards a shared goal of combating climate change will emerge.

A core goal of the stakeholder engagement process is to define specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound (SMART) targets for GHG emissions reduction by 2050 and will include intermediate targets leading to 2050. The success of HRM's emissions reduction targets will depend on the support of all stakeholders, particularly considering the Municipality's limited influence over community-wide emissions. Corporately, the Municipality contributes 1% of total GHG emissions. Therefore, HRM needs to work with external partners to achieve reductions in the remaining 99%. Non-profit groups and stakeholders, including iMatter, will play an integral role throughout the process, which will inform the pathway modelling as well as the broader public consultation set to take place throughout HRM during the summer and fall of 2019. Ultimately, the finalized CECAP plan will be brought forward to be considered by Regional Council in the spring of 2020.

The values of the CECAP initiative to embrace an inclusive stakeholder process with achievable targets, goals and strategies for climate change is critical and must be respected for a collaborative, community based problem-solving outcome. Guidance for stakeholder engagement in community energy planning can be found from the Community Energy Knowledge Action Partnership in their document *A Primer on Stakeholder Engagement in Community Energy Planning*. The document identifies that stakeholder engagement should be a process where stakeholders "are consulted and involved in the development of actionable agendas and implementation plans" which includes two broad objectives to empower stakeholders through buy-in and participation in the planning process as well as mutual capacity building through the exchange of knowledge and sharing of resources.

Predetermined mitigation targets set without engagement or consultation may pose a risk to the CECAP project development and outcomes, as it could be perceived that the process is not an authentic, genuine, inclusive, community-based approach. As a result, the project could become compromised if stakeholders withdraw from a process with a pre-determined outcome, thereby reducing the importance and validity of their inputs, capacity, and resources.

To maintain transparency within the CECAP project, staff can provide updates to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee for each milestone. Key milestones include synthesized stakeholder input, modelling results, public feedback, proposed targets, and the completion of the draft CECAP report.

2. To support marginalized communities in adaptation measures

The staff team includes members from the Diversity and Inclusion Office to ensure the core values of diversity and inclusion are incorporated into the CECAP project. A consultant, Sustainability Solutions Group, has been selected to lead the modelling and analysis of climate change milestones and targets to 2050. The adaptation portion of the modeling will define adaptation pathways from 2020 to 2050 and includes a sensitivity analysis of the socio-economic indicators and adaptation pathways to include vulnerable populations with the scenario of "no one left behind".

3. Detailed steps necessary to achieve net zero emissions by 2040 within 90 days

Components of the three requests from iMatter's Climate Inheritance Resolution are currently being addressed by staff through the CECAP project. The specific target of net zero by 2040 cannot be

recommended for adoption as it circumvents the ongoing stakeholder engagement and climate modelling work. As stakeholders continue to provide input and the modelling is run with various mitigation targets, the targets and proposed implementation plan will be refined through an iterative process, with the CECAP report to be considered for adoption by Regional Council in the spring of 2020. The timeline of the CECAP project cannot be further accelerated, as the scientific rigor provided by the consultant requires time to establish realistic, achievable goals. In addition, appropriate public consultation of the final report is required to ensure a genuine public engagement process.

Conclusion

An effective climate action plan will require substantive public policy decisions by Regional Council, which relies on the collaborative approach being followed by the CECAP project. It is premature to determine emission targets given the work already underway, and accelerating the rate of the CECAP will undermine both the scientific rigour as well as the stakeholder engagement process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the staff recommendations. Operational funding for the development of the CECAP initiative is an approved study to be funded from fiscal account M310. The initial development and Regional Council approval of the CECAP is anticipated to be complete by April 2020. No funding has yet been approved for CECAP implementation in fiscal year 2020-21 and beyond.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Committing to a resolution with a pre-set mitigation target could put the success of the CECAP project at risk as stakeholders may disengage due to the perception of a predetermined outcome and lack of genuine and inclusive engagement. There is reputational risk to setting a target unilaterally that must be achieved through collective action.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has been no community engagement undertaken in the development of this report, however extensive public consultations on the draft Community Energy and Climate Action Plan documents are planned for the summer and fall of 2019, as noted in the Discussion. External stakeholder engagement is currently underway through the CECAP Community Leadership Team, as noted in the Discussion.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The environmental implications associated with the staff recommendations are positive. The Municipality's response to climate change, both in terms of influencing meaningful mitigation measures throughout the community, and by facilitating sound adaptation strategies that promote equity and prosperity, should seek to future-proof the municipality and its natural and human systems.

ALTERNATIVES

No alternatives are recommended, as the CECAP initiative should continue as an ongoing stakeholder approach that will result in mitigation targets and adaptation pathways that are based on community collaboration. iMatter is a member of the stakeholder Leadership Team and can continue to be involved in discussions and action planning on climate change as it evolves.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – iMatter Climate Inheritance Resolution

Attachment B – Emissions Graph

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Shilo Gempton, Energy and Environment, Planner II, 902.490.4494

Report Approved by: Peter Duncan, Manager, Infrastructure Planning, 902.489.4634

Attachment A: iMatter Climate Inheritance Resolution

Climate Inheritance Resolution

A Resolution expressing the commitment of the Halifax Regional Council to protect the children and grandchildren of this community from the risks of climate destruction.

WHEREAS, 195 countries, including Canada and every country that is a member of the United Nations, reached an agreement in Paris, France on December 12, 2015, that recognizes the risk to our children's and grandchildren's future from climate change;

WHEREAS, the greatest burden resulting from an inadequate response to the climate crisis will be carried by the youngest generation, and all who follow;

WHEREAS, the risks from an inadequate response are potentially devastating, and include economic and environmental disruptions many of which are already being felt such as more severe storms, longer and hotter heat waves, worsening flood and drought cycles, growing invasive species and insect problems, accelerated species extinction rates, rising sea levels, increased wildfires, and a dramatic increase in refugees from climate impacted lands;

WHEREAS, leading climate scientists¹ have indicated that further delay in significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions will rapidly push humanity past the point where disastrous consequences can be avoided;

WHEREAS, numerous governmental and non-governmental bodies across the nation and the world have already adopted climate action plans to immediately and rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also stopping them entirely within 25 years;

WHEREAS, youth of Halifax have brought this Council a Youth Climate Report Card highlighting the gap between what we are doing today and actions that would be necessary to protect their future;

WHEREAS, Council must working constructively, using ingenuity, innovation, and courageous determination to protect our community's children and grandchildren from the risk of climate destruction.

WHEREAS, youth of Halifax have indicated a willingness to work with this Council on such actions, we, therefore, move that:

BE IT RESOLVED, that Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council requests a staff report regarding committing the municipality to complete or update a Halifax Climate Action Plan for consideration that significantly reduces Halifax's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by the year 2040 for corporate and community emissions.

¹ Hansen J, Kharecha P, Sato M, Masson-Delmotte V, Ackerman F, Beerling DJ, et al. (2013) Assessing "Dangerous Climate Change": Required Reduction of Carbon Emissions to Protect Young People, Future Generations and Nature. PLoS ONE 8(12): e81648. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0081648

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the HRM Council ensure that there be adequate measures taken to support marginalized communities in adapting to climate change. People who are oppressed because of their race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, social class, age, etc. are going to feel the burdens of climate change more than other people because they are already burdened by other factors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Halifax Regional Council commits to start the Halifax Climate Action Plan detailing the steps necessary to achieve the net zero by 2040 creation modification process within 90 days, and to complete it as soon as possible

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by _____ in _____ on _____ with a quorum present.

Signed by: _____

Attest: _____

ATTACHMENT B

