

DATE: August 10, 2020

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Dave Dyer, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works

SUBJECT: Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council POSTPONES the decision to join the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance until the Climate Action Strategy is complete and additional clarity is available on the program.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is provide a recommendation for Council on whether or not the City should join the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This initiative aligns with the *myPG* goals of Reduce Carbon Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change, Clean Air and Green Energy. Joining the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance would also support several actions identified in the 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance (GCoM) is the “world’s largest alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to a low emissions, climate resilient future¹.” The GCoM includes cities and partners in more than 10,000 cities across 120 countries that share a long-term vision of supporting voluntary action to combat climate change.

At the May 25th 2020 Council Meeting, Mayor and Council received a letter from the Mayor of the District of Saanich encouraging the City of Prince George to join the GCoM to “work together in combating climate change².” At the July 13th Council Meeting, the Mayor of the City of Rossland sent a similar letter.

Council has requested that Administration report back with more information on the requirements of joining the GCoM and provide a recommendation on membership.

¹ https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL_Data-TWG_Reporting-Framework_website_FINAL-13-Sept-2018_for-translation.pdf

² <https://pub-princegeorge.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=4272>

DISCUSSION:

Local governments that have committed to the GCoM pledge to “implement policies and undertake measures to:

- a. reduce/limit greenhouse gas emissions;
- b. prepare for the impacts of climate change;
- c. increase access to sustainable energy; and,
- d. track progress toward these objectives³.”

The City of Prince George (City) is a strong candidate for joining the GCoM given the City’s long history of climate leadership and recent approval by Council of the 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan, which sets ambitious long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets to 2050. The City has also been working with several community stakeholders to create updated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies to prepare the community of Prince George for the impacts of climate change. In addition, the City’s Downtown Renewable Energy System increases our community’s access to sustainable energy.

Committing to a GCoM membership would demonstrate the City of Prince George’s long-term dedication to climate action. The GCoM provides its Canadian municipal partners with a support network to assist with achieving climate action goals. This provides opportunities for knowledge sharing with similarly sized municipalities. An additional benefit of membership includes support from GCoM administrative staff related to data compilation, networking and technical tools.

The City’s Official Community Plan has several objectives and policies that support the City demonstrating climate leadership related to taking action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Joining the GCoM would fulfill several actions within the 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan as laid out in Table 1.

2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan Actions
MA10: Perform a review every 5 years of emissions reduction targets and actions to identify if implemented actions are achieving targets.
MA12: Demonstrate leadership as a municipality on climate change mitigation through having an elected official join the BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council, and engage with local partners on research development and education and capacity building opportunities.
MA13: Commit to long-term community engagement on carbon emissions reduction.
MA14: Review and update Climate Change Mitigation Plan every 5 to 10 years to ensure targets and actions are on-track and align with leading practices.

Table 1: Actions from the 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan that are supported by the City joining the GCoM.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:

The City has already fulfilled many of the GCoM requirements for membership; however, should the City decide to join, some additional work will be required within two (2) years. Table 2 below describes the requirements of joining GCoM and the City’s progress on each item.

³ https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/FINAL_Data-TWG_Reporting-Framework_website_FINAL-13-Sept-2018_for-translation.pdf

GCoM Commitments	Description	Meets Requirement	Additional Work Needed
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory	Community-wide GHG inventory that includes transportation, buildings and waste.	YES – Community inventories are completed for 2002, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2016 and 2017.	Within 4 years of joining another community GHG inventory must be completed.
GHG Reduction Targets	Reduction targets must align with the Federal Government’s target of 30% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030.	TENTATIVE – The City’s GHG reduction target is to reduce by 12% from 2017 levels by 2030. GCoM has advised that PG’s targets may be sufficient, but further evaluation is required.	When the Federal Government formally updates their target to net-zero emissions by 2050, GCoM members may be required to update their municipal reduction targets to align within 5 years. The City’s current target for 2050 is 80% below 2017 levels.
Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	Assessment of climate hazards faced by the community and factors that may impact the ability to adapt.	YES – A risk and vulnerability assessment was performed as part of the Climate Change Adaptation planning processes; however, some additional information is needed.	Minor updates are necessary which include assessing adaptive capacity, evaluating the likelihood of major climate hazards and identifying sectors and assets most impacted by these hazards. This work is in progress as part of the Changemakers Project.
Climate Action and Energy Access Plans	The City must have action plans for both climate change mitigation and adaptation that are approved by Council.	YES – The 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan is approved by Council. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is complete but has not yet been reviewed by Council. The Climate Action Strategy will include actions for both climate change mitigation and adaptation.	The Climate Change Adaptation Plan has not been reviewed by Council. Inclusion of adaptation goals into the upcoming Climate Action Strategy may also satisfy this requirement.

Table 2: Requirements of GCoM membership and the City’s progress on each item.

An additional requirement of membership in GCoM is long-term monitoring and reporting, meaning that municipalities must report every four years on progress of climate action efforts after finalizing the requirements in Table 2. This includes providing an updated community GHG inventory, and status updates of action implementation for all actions identified in both the Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Adaptation Strategy. GCoM Canada has advised that they are currently reviewing the monitoring requirements to strengthen and improve the program to best suit Canadian municipalities. It is expected that updated requirements will be shared in early 2021.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is no upfront cost to joining GCoM; however, fulfilling the requirements of membership will result in some additional costs. The Environmental Services team does not currently have a dedicated staff person working on energy management or climate change, which makes implementation of and reporting on actions from the Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Adaptation Strategy more limited. At this time, it would be necessary for the City to seek assistance from an external consultant to complete the initial remaining requirements outlined in Table 2.

External assistance would also be necessary for long-term monitoring commitments, which would occur every four years. The estimated cost is approximately \$15,000 every four years. Regardless of joining GCoM, it would be a best management practice to engage in this review and monitor the implementation of the Climate Action Strategy to ensure the City is on track with its goals and targets.

It may be possible to fund the estimated costs described above from funds received annually under the BC Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP).

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

Upon review of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance (GCoM) and its requirements of membership, and considering current staff resources, City Administration presents three options. Because it most strongly aligns with the City's 2020 Climate Mitigation Plan and the myPG pillar of "Environmental Leadership and Climate Action", and it allows time to complete the Climate Action Strategy, City Administration recommends Option 1.

Option 1 – That Council postpone making a decision on joining the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance until the Climate Action Strategy is complete and additional clarity is available on the program.

Postponing a decision will enable City staff to bring the Climate Action Strategy to Council in early 2021 for its review. At that time there will likely to be a clearer understanding of how the City plans to advance the actions under the Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Adaptation Strategy over the next five years, what resources will be available to do this work and the future direction of the GCOM program. However, the delay may result in lost opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing in the interim. If timelines proceed as scheduled, Council could consider the commitment to GCoM in early 2021.

Option 2 – That Council commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance now and utilize external consultants to assist with reporting requirements.

Joining GCoM demonstrates the City of Prince George's commitment to climate leadership and signals that the City is dedicated to implementing the actions identified in the City's climate plans. Joining GCoM at this time could assist staff when developing the Climate

Action Strategy. At this time, staff resources are limited for implementing reporting requirements and an external consultant would be necessary.

Option 3 – That Council not proceed with committing to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance.

There are requirements of GCoM that will require additional capacity and resources. The City could forego committing to GCoM and, instead, seek out other climate leadership opportunities, such as the BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council, and focus on implementing other actions in the Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Adaptation Strategy.

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY PROGRESS:

City staff is proceeding with preparation of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS) following approval by Council of the City's 2020 Climate Change Mitigation Plan on May 25th, 2020. The CAS will be a five-year work plan that will incorporate actions from both the Climate Change Mitigation Plan and Adaptation Plan. Development of the CAS involves identifying the feasibility of implementing actions within a five-year period and providing additional information on the costs and benefits associated with each action. This process involves significant inter-departmental consultation. Support is being provided with this process by the Integrated Climate Action for BC Communities Initiative (ICABCCI) from Simon Fraser University (SFU).

The development of the CAS will occur in the following phases:

1. (Phase 1): Research and Organization – July to September 2020
2. (Phase 2): Inter-Departmental Consultation – September to November 2020
3. (Phase 3): Drafting Strategy – November 2020 to January 2021
4. (Phase 4): Council Review – January to March 2021

Progress is underway by several City departments to implement actions from the Climate Change Mitigation Plan, including the following:

- a. Pursuing grant funding from BC Hydro to undertake energy audits in City buildings;
- b. Applying for support from a UBC graduate student to undertake research in support of a Low Carbon Transportation Strategy;
- c. Engaging with the development community on BC Energy Step Code;
- d. Working with the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions and UBC to prepare policy recommendations to enhance energy efficiency in the built environment; and,
- e. Exploring online and conference call options for office functions.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The City of Prince George is an excellent candidate for the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Alliance (GCoM) and is well on its way to completing the membership requirements. Joining GCoM would solidify the City of Prince George's commitment to climate action, and provide several benefits to the City as it works to implement actions from the Climate Change Mitigation Plan.

However, there are expectations of long-term membership that would require the City of Prince George to designate resources to implementing actions with these plans and involve monitoring of progress towards GHG reduction targets. This would include completing an updated community GHG inventory every four years at an estimated cost of \$15,000.

Environmental Services staff are in the process of preparing a Climate Action Strategy which will breakdown the actions that will be feasible to complete in a five-year period. The Strategy is expected to be complete for Council's review in early 2021.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Dave Dyer, General Manager, Engineering and Public Works

PREPARED BY: Andrea Byrne, Environmental Coordinator, Environmental Services

APPROVED:

Kathleen Soltis, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2020/08/31