

Environmental Advisory Committee

Annual Report to Council (2024)



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RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee’s 2024 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2025.

MEMBERSHIP

Citizen Members (January 1 through to December 31, 2024)

Bill Marsh (Chair)	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Carmen Piercey (Vice Chair)	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Scott Kilborn	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Jordan Lucas	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Kevin Aschim	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Alan Luck	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Monique Veitch	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term

Council Representation

In November 2023, Council appointed Councillor Biermanski as the City Council representative and Councillor MacKay as the alternate City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2024.

In October 2024, Council reappointed Councillor Biermanski as the City Council representative and appointed Councillor Mike Killick as the alternate City Council representative for the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2025.

The EAC appreciates that a Council representative can be made available for the scheduled committee meetings. The importance of this liaison has proven beneficial for this committee to bring environmental issues to Council.

City Administration Representation

Committee assistance was provided by Government/Indigenous Relations & Environment Department staff:

- Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment
- Payton Homeak, Environmental Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement

OVERVIEW

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) was established through [Bylaw 29/2005](#) to advise Council on issues related to the environment. The purpose of the Committee

is to provide advice to Council with respect to environmental policies, plans and initiatives, especially where a public perspective is desirable.

Direction and assistance to the EAC were obtained through the City's Government/Indigenous Relations & Environment Department staff.

On January 23, 2024, Council provided the EAC with the following annual priorities:

1. Review and approve the 2024 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program applications and review and recommend the Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) recipients.
2. Provide advice on the update and review of the Sustainable Building Policy C-P&E-12, Environmental Management of Contaminated Sites Policy C-IS-06 and the Idle-Free Bylaw.
3. Provide advice on the Climate Adaptation Implementation Strategy

ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The EAC met nine times in 2024 (January to June, and September to November). Meetings continued in a hybrid model, allowing members to optionally attend in person or via Zoom.

Priorities – Advice to Council

Sustainable Building Policy C-P&E-12

Due to conflicting timelines and limited staff capacity, updates to the Sustainable Building Policy C-P&E-12 have been postponed until 2025.

Environmental Management of Contaminated Sites Policy C-IS-06

On February 22, 2024 – Lyndon Rempel, Environmental Management Supervisor, City of St. Albert, provided an update and a red-lined draft of the Environmental Management of Contaminated Site Policy C-IS-06. On April 27, 2024 – Meghan Myers provided a final copy of the Environmental Management of Contaminated Site Policy C-IS-06 and the EAC approved the policy. The final policy was approved by City Council at their July 2, 2024 meeting.

Idle-Free Bylaw

On February 22, 2024 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement, and Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment, City of St. Albert, provided a presentation on the Idle Free Bylaw.

Climate Adaptation Implementation Strategy

On March 21, 2024 – Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment, City of St. Albert, provided an update on the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) Climate Risk

and Vulnerability Assessment and Local Climate Adaptation plan. This helped to inform a similar presentation to St. Albert Council in November 2024.

Community Recognition Program Nomination Review

No nominations were received in the Environmental Stewardship category for 2024.

Environmental Initiative Grant Application Extension Requests

On March 21, 2024 – M. Green, and A. King provided an update on the Braeside Community Pop up Garden pilot project and requested an extension request.

The EAC approved the Environmental Grant Extension request for the Braeside Community Pop-Up Garden pilot project to December 31, 2024.

On October 24, 2024 – The EAC reviewed and approved two Environmental Grant Extension requests for the Sister Alphonse Academy Medicine Wheel Garden Project to June 30, 2025, and the St. Albert Backyard Gardeners event project to October 30, 2025.

Green Community Grant Applications

On November 28, 2024, the EAC reviewed four applications and three of those applications were approved for funding. This included:

#	Project Name (alphabetical)	Project Description	\$ Requested	\$ Approved by EAC
1.	Big Lake Environment Support Society (BLESS)	Reprinting of BLESS's Bird Guide to Lois Hole Centennial Provincial Park. This book has recently 'sold out'. BLESS would like to use the proceeds from the sales of this guide to fund their activities to conserve the lake and the Sturgeon River.	\$2,861.00	\$0
2.	Coal Mine Park Stewards	Continue with the development of the pollinator garden and increase the volunteer base in being stewards to this public space. Planning to use a solar power water system to improve the success rate of expanding the pollinator garden and survival of	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00

		existing native plants in the space. Planning to use this area as an education space for native and non-native plants, and to showcase the native pollinators in action.		
3.	St. Albert-Sturgeon Métis Local Garden	Expand and continue to grow the Métis garden plot to provide fresh vegetables to Métis Local members facing food instability and offer a space for cultural exchange, where gardening skills and traditional plant knowledge are passed down. It also addresses the need for traditional plants and medicines that are meaningful to Métis culture, fostering community connections and supporting cultural practices.	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
4.	Wildrose Elementary School	Involves Grade 1 and Grade 2 students at Wild Rose Elementary School, who will visit Salisbury Greenhouse to learn about planting and caring for strawberry plants. In addition, students will attend sessions with Raymond Potts and Dr. Jones to explore traditional Indigenous knowledge before planting native species on the school grounds as part of the St. Albert Naturalization Projects. The initiative aims to deepen children's understanding of food production, environmental stewardship and the value of Indigenous knowledge	\$7,700.00	\$4,000.00

		in preserving the natural world.		
	Total Grant Funds Requested:		\$16,061.00	
	Total Grant Funds Available:		\$33,200.00	
	Total Grant Funds Approved:		\$9,500.00	

EAC Input Provided to Administration

Environmental Initiatives Grant Program (EIGP) Recommendations

On March 21, 2024 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement, City of St. Albert, reviewed the current Environmental Initiatives Grant Guidelines with the EAC, updating both the grant's name to "Green Community Grant" and the guidelines based on the committee's feedback.

Millenium Park –Update

On March 21, 2024 – The EAC requested an update and discussion on Millenium Park.

Relevant motion from March 21, 2024, EAC Meeting:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommend to Council to consider that the conceptual design for the Millennium Park is contrary to the principles and objectives of the City's own Green Environment Strategy. Specifically, the Green Environment Strategy sets out goals for the protection of natural features, biodiversity, wetlands and urban forests.

Whereas the Strategy states that the community of St. Albert, which received designation as a "Tree City of the World" in 2021 and 2022, is committed to the preservation of our urban forest. The selected conceptual design for Millennium Park is in direct contradiction to these stated objectives because it requires the removal of 56% of the trees and most of the wetlands along the Sturgeon River that falls within the proposed park boundaries.

Now therefore, to ensure protection of the few natural areas remaining along the Sturgeon River within St. Albert, the Environmental Advisory Committee respectfully recommends to Council, that Council not proceed with passage of the Borrowing Bylaw 3/2024 to provide the \$20.8 million funding required for Millennium Park.

Integrated Pest Management Plan Review and Update

April 27, 2024 – Melissa Logan, Environment Coordinator – Sturgeon River and Natural Areas, Environment, and Erin Pickard, Supervisor, Parks & Open Spaces, Public Operations, City of St. Albert, provided an update on the Integrated Pest Management Plan.

November 28, 2024 - Melissa Logan, Environment Coordinator – Sturgeon River and Natural Areas, Environment and Erin Pickard, Supervisor, Parks & Open Spaces, Public Operations, City of St. Albert, provided a presentation on the updates to the Integrated Pest Management Plan and led discussion and feedback on coyote and beaver management appendices of the plan.

City of St. Albert Marketing and Communications Plan

May 23, 2024 – Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement, Environment, City of St. Albert, provided an update and review of the City of St. Albert’s Marketing and Communications Plan.

Community Emissions Development Plan Workshop

September 26, 2024 – Gage Tweedy, Municipal Energy Specialist, Environment, City of St. Albert, coordinated a Community Emissions Development Plan workshop that reviewed the key concepts from St. Albert’s existing Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and greenhouse gas reduction considerations for developing a Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Updates Provided to EAC

Climate Change North Saskatchewan River Basin

January 25, 2024 – Melissa Logan, Environmental Coordinator –Sturgeon River and Natural Areas, City of St. Albert, gave a presentation on climate change impacts in the North Saskatchewan River Basin.

Green Environment Strategy Update

January 25, 2024 – Meghan Myers, Manager, Environment, City of St. Albert, provided an update on the Green Environment Strategy.

Waste and Diversion Programs

May 23, 2024 – John Potter Manager Transportation & Waste Management, Public Operations, City of St. Albert, provided an update on the 2023 Waste and Diversion program.

Environmental Projects Tour

June 21, 2024 – The EAC went on a scheduled tour across the City and stopped at four unique locations.

1. Kingswood Dock: Manda Wilde, Supervisor, Parks Planning and Stewardship, provided an overview of the environmental impacts and low impact development of this project.

2. Coal Mine Road Community Garden: community member and Master Gardener, Dale Ford, and Engineer, Omar Nef, provided an overview of the water capture project that was supported by the Environment Initiatives Grant Program.
3. Grosvenor Park: Alan Robertson, Naturalization Coordinator, introduced the 2024 Arbor Day site and the committee got to see past and present successes of the Naturalization program.
4. Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP): Akinsdale Project: Bill Marsh, EAC Chair, provided an overview of his home upgrades financed by CEIP.

Energy Management Program

October 24, 2024 –Gage Tweedy, Municipal Energy Specialist, Environment, City of St. Albert, gave a presentation on the Energy Management Program for 2024.

Energy Efficiency Programs

October 24, 2024 — Payton Homeak, Environment Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement, Environment, City of St. Albert, provided a presentation on the Home Energy Efficiency Grant and CEIP.

3-YEAR WORK PLAN

On December 14, 2022, the EAC met to complete a 3-year work plan (2023-2025). The work plan was developed to provide a longer-term picture of the EAC's workload and identify potential priority areas for the next three years. The session was facilitated by City staff from Strategic Services. Prior to the session the EAC reviewed City documents including the Municipal Development Plan (Flourish), Corporate Business Plan and the Environmental Master Plan. The plan was approved at the March 23, 2023 meeting.

2025 Priority Recommendations

These are the major environmental initiatives that are being developed in 2025 that require in depth formal involvement from EAC:

- Review and approve the 2025 Green Community Grant Program and review and recommend the Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) recipients.
- Provide advice on the update and review of the Sustainable Buildings Policy C-P&E-12.
- Provide advice on the update of the Climate Adaptation Plan.
- Provide advice on the Natural Asset Management project.

The EAC greatly appreciates the support provided by City Administration in the completion of the EAC's annual priorities. The EAC was always provided comprehensive background information before taking up key issues and making recommendations to the Council.

EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS

The EAC would like to acknowledge the continued support and leadership of Council for establishing the EAC to provide advice to Council and Administration on environmental matters. The EAC supports innovative programs and encourages citizen participation in environmental responsibility as an extension of the Environmental Master Plan.

The EAC would like to recognize the dedicated efforts of Meghan Myers and Payton Homeak in preparing agendas and presentations, managing meetings and coordinating with other City staff. They make our meetings productive, engaging, interesting and fun. We are fortunate to have you.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE 3 YEAR WORK
PLAN (2023-2025)

Environmental Advisory Committee – Work Plan 2023 - 2025

Established under Bylaw 35/2015, the City of St. Albert's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) provides strategic advice and input to Council on the development and implementation of the Environmental Master Plan and other related environmental long-range strategies. The Committee also provides input to Administration during the development of Council and administrative policies, plans and initiatives and feedback on public engagement.

Given the breadth of environmental policies, strategies and initiatives (see references below – page 6) within the City of St. Albert, the Committee's work is invaluable. To maximize the EAC's value to Council and Administration, this plan endeavors to provide insight into the next three years of the committee's work.

There are three distinct functions performed by the EAC to meet its goals:

1. Provide Formal Advice to Council
Provide formal written advice to Council, typically on issues identified as priorities by Council.
2. Provide Input to Administration
Provide informal comments on environmental projects or issues brought by Administration.
3. Receive Information from Administration
New information or updates can be provided to the Committee on topics that are deemed necessary, including topics that the Committee will later be expected to provide input or advice on.

As an advisory committee in which membership changes each year and ensuring there is capacity to provide advice and expert information to new policies, strategies and initiatives, it is expected the proposed plan will undergo changes. Nonetheless the EAC supports the value of providing insight of its likely work in the next 3 years. At the same time, acknowledging that the EAC does not act on its own, the plan will reflect what Council and Administration currently see EAC undertaking in the foreseeable future. This plan is a dynamic document that will be reviewed and updated annually while retaining the 3-year forecast that aligns with the City's three-year business planning and budget process. With that approach in mind, the first year will always contain greater detail.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is required by the Municipal Government Act and sets out the goals and policies for all aspects of the municipality's development: population and growth management; housing and neighbourhood design; economic activities and development; parks, recreation and schools; environmental management; transportation and infrastructure; social, health and protective services and intermunicipal and regional cooperation and planning.

Committee actions are either **Provide advice to Council**, **Provide input to Admin**, or **Receive information**

Air				
	Topic	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air Quality Data and Education ▪ Climate Change ▪ Reduce Energy Consumption & GHG Emissions ▪ Energy Efficiency Community Based Programs ▪ Transportation 	Air Quality Data & Education	Provide input to Admin Air Quality Resource for residents to borrow from the St. Albert library. Test the indoor & outdoor air quality resources and review manual before launch.		Receive information 2024 ambient air quality data (level within CRAQMF, trends, number of poor air quality days, comparison with other locales, etc.) from AEP and ACA.
	Idle-Free Bylaw		Receive information Metrics of Idle free bylaw update Provide Advice to Council Idle free bylaw update	
	Climate Adaptation Plan		Provide input to Admin Review and provide recommendations implementation actions	
	Energy Efficiency Community	Receive Information Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential	Receive Information Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential	Receive Information Provide an update on incentive programs to encourage residential

	Based Programs	property owners to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.	property owners to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.	property owners to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. Provide input to Admin Final Report on the Home Energy Efficiency Program (2023-2025)
	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goals		Receive Information Review of implementation plan of the Greenhouse Gases Emissions Reduction Goals	
	Sustainable Building Policy Review	Advice to Council Review Policy and Updates		
	Environmental Sustainable Policy Update	Provide input to Admin Review Policy and framework to advance City and community environmental goals		
Land				
▪ MDP; Development of Long-Range Community Strategies	Topic	2023	2024	2025
	Municipal Development	Receive Information	Provide input to Admin:	Provide input to Admin:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preserve and Manage Trees, Parks, and Natural Areas ▪ Waste and Diversion Programs ▪ Net Zero Accelerator Program 	Plan; Development of Long-Range strategies	Green Environment Strategy Update on Implementation Strategy and Pilot Final Report	Resilient Infrastructure Long-Range Strategy: address EMP Goals (Manage Air Quality, Reduce Energy Consumption, reduce garbage to landfill, Reduce water consumption)	Mobility Choices Long-Range Strategy: address EMP Goals (Promote Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Transportation Choices)
	Planning for Millennium Park Development		Receive Information Completion of detailed design inclusive of public engagement, and construction for the Millennium Park site, meeting the vision for the park as “an active, multi-use park; a centre-piece of downtown”	
	Waste & Diversion Programs	Receive information St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update, Updates to the Residential Solid Waste Management Bylaw and Federal/Provincial changes.	Receive information St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update.	Receive information St. Albert Waste and Diversion Programs Update.
	Net Zero Accelerator Program	Receive information Provide an overview of the program, tools, services, and knowledge to develop and implement	Provide Input to Administration Participate in an online workshop to refine projects, policies, and workplan.	Receive information Review Recommendations. Summary Report and next steps

		Community Energy and Emissions Plans		
	Natural Areas	Provide Input to Administration Review the 2023 Integrated Pest Management Plan	Receive information Invasive Species Risk Identification and Management Plan	Provide Input to Administration Natural Area Protection Policy

Water

	Topic	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and Improve the Sturgeon River Watershed ▪ Improve Water Quality of the Sturgeon River ▪ Reduce Water Consumption 	Watershed Management	Receive information Review Keep Fish Wet Program, Stormwater management facility assessment and maintenance program	Provide Input to Administration Riparian Areas Restoration Program	
	Water Quality	Receive information Review urban Primary Land and Vegetation Inventory assessments, Pesticide Updates	Receive information River water quality updates	Provide Input to Administration Water Quality Improvements
	Water Conservation	Provide advice to Council Review of Water Conservation Bylaw		

People

	Topic	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Community Environmental Stewardship ▪ Community Grants ▪ Community Recognition Program ▪ Urban Biodiversity Pilot Education Program 	Environmental Initiatives Grant (EIG)	Receive Information City wide Civic Grant Program Updates effective September 2023	Provide input to Admin EIG review and brainstorming of potential initiatives / projects	

		Provide input to Admin		
	Environment Communication s Plan		Provide input to Admin Update of the Communications Plan and Programs	
	Community Recognition Program	Provide Advice to Council Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review	Provide Advice to Council Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review	Provide Advice to Council Environmental Stewardship Nomination Review
	Urban Biodiversity Pilot Program	Provide Advice to Council Native Bee Monitoring & Education Program Provide input to Admin Native Bee Monitoring and Education Resources; Coyote Education Pilot	Receive Information Update on 2023 programming Provide input to Admin Further engagement and resources to piloting the programming	Receive Information Update on the programming

REFERENCES:

Corporate Business Plan 2018 – 2021 (includes Council Strategic Priority #6: Environmental Stewardship: Explore innovative environmental and conservation opportunities)

Environmental Advisory Committee Bylaw 35/2015

Idle Free Bylaw 16/2007

Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 15/2007

Land Use Bylaw 9/2005

Environmental Sustainability; Policy C-EUS-01

Environmental Initiatives Grant Program; Policy C-EUS-02

Cultivating Our Future – Community Sustainability Framework (2015)

Environmental Master Plan (2014)

Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (2010)

Utilities Master Plan (2014)

Transportation Master Plan (2015)

SMART City Master Plan (2015)

Capital Region Air Quality Management Framework (2009)

Capital Region Particulate Matter Response Plan (2011)

St. Albert Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Forecast and Target Report (2009)

St. Albert Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2013)

Parks and Open Spaces Management Plan (2007)

St. Albert Natural Area Conservation & Management Plan (2015)

Urban Forest Management Plan (2017)

Integrated Pest Management Plan (2017)

Grey Nuns White Spruce Park Management Plan (2014)

Solid Waste Management Systems Review (2008)

State of the Sturgeon River Watershed Report (2012)

Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity Plan (2012)