

Environmental Advisory Committee

Annual Report to Council (2020)



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RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Advisory Committee's 2020 Annual Report be accepted as information and that the Environmental Advisory Committee continue to operate as presently constituted through 2021.

MEMBERSHIP

Citizen Members (January 1 through to December 31, 2020)

Anshuman Khare (Vice Chair)	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Tara Fulton (Chair)	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Allisson Lefebvre	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Adrienne McGarrigle	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Michael (Brad) Peori	Citizen-at-large	Last of two-year term
Sherman Hanowski	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term
Steve Lord	Citizen-at-large	First of two-year term

Council Representation

In October 2019, Council appointed Councillor Joly as the primary and Councillor Hansen as the alternate representatives for the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC). In November 2020, Council appointed Councillor Hansen as the City Council representative for the EAC.

On October 21, 2019, Council approved a governance restructure as a two-year pilot project. As a result, the Council representative for Citizen Committees (i.e. EAC) will serve as an *ex officio* non-voting member.

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 Utilities and Environment Department staff:

Meghan Myers, Environmental Coordinator – Community Strategy & Engagement
Christian Benson, Manager, Environment
Kate Polkovsky, Director, Environment & Utilities

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 Utilities and Environment Department staff.

On February 18, 2020 Council provided the EAC with the following annual priorities:

1. Recommend the 2020 Environmental Initiatives Grant (EIG) Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
2. Provide advice on the Environmental Master Plan (EMP) update
3. Provide advice on the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy
4. Provide advice on the Parks Bylaw and Fire Bylaw reviews and Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)/Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) Bylaw development.

COVID-19 Impacts

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic declared in March 2020, the EAC priorities and meeting schedule were significantly affected. City budget was modified to reduce shortfalls due to operational changes and projects were cancelled or put on hold. Specific impacts to the EAC priorities and workplan are described in the *Activities Progress Report* section of this report.

ACTIVITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The EAC met six times during 2020 (January, February, May, September, October, November). The meetings following the March shutdown were hosted virtually through Zoom.

In a typical operational year, the EAC meets nine times, meeting monthly except in July, August, and December.

Priorities – Advice to Council

Environmental Initiatives Grant Program Recommendations

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIG Program was cancelled in 2020.

Community Recognition Program Recommendations

The EAC reviewed the nominations under the environmental stewardship category of the City's Community Recognition Program. The addition of the environmental stewardship category to this program was a recommendation from the EAC 2018 work plan (environmental leadership recognition).

At the February 27, 2020 EAC meeting, the Committee met in camera to review three submissions in accordance with [Council Policy C-CS-03](#) and one was recommended to City Council for recognition.

On May 4, 2020, City Council approved the Community Recognition Program award in the environmental stewardship category to the following individual:

Dolores Andressen - Dolores is a long-term resident who has provided a life-long contribution to the environment in St. Albert in both her personal and professional life. Dolores' legacy began in the 1990s when she, along with other community residents, created the St. Albert Environmental Action Committee introducing neighbourhood recycling and composting. Dolores' passion for the environment is exemplified in the environmental initiatives she spearheaded and achieved at Bertha Kennedy School and the community projects including the St. Albert Parish Heritage Garden.

Environmental Master Plan (EMP) Update

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EMP public engagement activities (scheduled to begin April 2020) for the update of the plan were cancelled in 2020.

Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy public engagement activities were cancelled in 2020.

Parks Bylaw Review

At the February 27, 2020 meeting, Manda Wilde, Senior Project Manager with City of St. Albert Recreation and Parks, presented information on the Parks Bylaw review project and facilitated discussion and feedback on the bylaw. M. Wilde drafted a "What We Heard" document based on the discussion at this meeting. Unfortunately, future

public engagement opportunities scheduled throughout 2020 were put on hold due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fire Bylaw Review

At the September 24, 2020 meeting, Mike Bos, Fire Prevention Office 1 with City of St. Albert Fire Services Department presented the revisions to the Fire Bylaw specific to residential fire pits. The revisions to the Fire Bylaw were approved by City Council at the beginning of 2020. The Committee was interested in receiving additional information on the guidelines and regulations of fire pits in other municipalities. This information was provided to the Committee in their October meeting agenda package. The next update of the Fire Bylaw will be in four years and will be added to the Committee's workplan.

Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP)

At the November 26, 2020 meeting Carlee Beaver, Program Lead and Stephen Ottoni, Program Director from the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) presented information on the CEIP. Information answered the questions - who is the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC)? And what is the Clean Energy Improvement Program? The presentation also provided an overview of the program details, opportunities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the next steps in the program development for St. Albert. It was decided the Committee would wait to review St. Albert's Market Study in January 2021 and then make a recommendation to City Council on the program.

Input – EAC Provided to Administration

Annual Report on the Environment

September 24, 2020– Committee received a preview of the 2019 Report on the Environment published annually to update residents on the goals and targets set in the EMP. Like many City initiatives, the 2019 Report on the Environment was put on hold when the City started to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019 report will be released online rather than in the St. Albert Gazette.

Environmental Initiatives Grant Extension Requests

As per the [Environmental Initiatives Grant Council Policy C-EUS-02](#), recipients are required to use funds within one year of being awarded unless an extension is approved by the EAC. Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, administration received five requests for grant extensions and forwarded them to EAC for their approval.

Relevant motion from September 24, 2020 meeting:

Moved by A. Khare

That the following 2019 grant recipients and project be granted a reporting extension to December 16, 2021:

-) Bertha Kennedy Catholic School – Bertha Kennedy Learning Garden (\$4,000.00)
-) Sister Alphonse Academy – Edible Learning Garden (\$2000.00)
-) St. Albert Tool Library Society – SATS Project (\$3850.00)
-) Keenooshayo School – Green Team Club (\$865.00)
-) Outreach High School - Tree Huggers Club (\$1650.00)

CARRIED

Updates - Provided to EAC

Sturgeon River Watershed Management Plan

January 23, 2020 – Leah Kongsrude, Executive Director, North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance presented on the role of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, background on the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SRWA), work completed to date in the Sturgeon River Watershed, Sturgeon River Watershed Management Plan document and next steps for the SRWA.

Air Quality in the Capital Region

May 28, 2020 – Gary Redmond, Executive Director, Alberta Capital Airshed (ACA) and Kevin McCullum, Data Manager, ACA provided information on the ACA, monitoring air quality in the airshed, air quality trends, access to air quality in the airshed, air quality awareness, and opportunities for public participation in air quality monitoring.

Municipal Energy Manager Program

May 28, 2020 – Cassie Kupsch – Municipal Energy Specialist with the City of St. Albert provided information on the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) Municipal Energy Manager Program in which C. Kupsch's position is partially funded through. In addition, attendees reviewed energy basics, the portfolio of City buildings under consideration, benchmarking analysis, greenhouse gas reduction goals, Energy Management Assessment, Energy Management Plan, building shutdown consumption monitoring and future projects.

Environmental Management System Update

October 22, 2020 – Kristen Glass – Supervisor, Environmental Management with the City of St. Albert presented on the City's Environmental Management System, which is

the process the City uses to identify, prioritize and address the environmental impacts that may result from our day to day activities.

Waste Management Update & COVID-19 Impacts

October 22, 2020 – Olivia Kwok – Supervisor, Waste and Diversion Programs with the City of St. Albert presented on the City's Waste and Diversion programs, COVID-19 impacts and current projects.

Municipal Energy Management Program - Updates

November 26, 2020 – Cassie Kupsch, Municipal Energy Specialist with the City of St. Albert presented on Energy Management Assessment, Energy Management Plans, facilities and projects, energy modelling, progress towards greenhouse gas emissions targets, employee engagement and future projects.

3-YEAR WORK PLAN

In October 2018, EAC completed a 3-year work plan for 2019-2021. The purpose of the work planning session included:

-) To update the EAC 3-year work plan developed in 2016
-) Reaffirm Committee's role (Bylaw 35/2015)
-) Determine Committee's planned actions for next 3 years based on the Environmental Master Plan
-) Ensure Committee's work is aligned with major City plans and guiding environmental plans; and
-) Provide advice to Council priorities related to environment.

The EAC 3-Year work plan 2019-2021 summary is attached in Appendix I.

Due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, EAC's work plan in 2021 will be modified. As a result of the Environmental Master Plan update postponement in 2020, the EAC primary focus in 2021 will be the update of this plan. In addition, the City has the opportunity to pursue a Clean Energy Improvement Program in our community with Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC).

2021 Priority Recommendations

These are the major environmental initiatives that are being developed in 2021 that require in depth formal involvement from EAC and written advice to Council.

1. Recommend 2021 Environmental Initiatives Grant Program and Community Recognition Program (environmental stewardship category) Recipients
2. Provide advice on the Environmental Master Plan (EMP) update
3. Provide advice on the Parks Bylaw review
4. Provide advice on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)/Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) Bylaw and program development

EAC ENDORSEMENT OF CITY PROGRAMS

The EAC would like to acknowledge the continued support and leadership of St. Albert 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 acknowledges the dedication and competency of the City of St. Albert's Utilities and Environment staff throughout 2020 as well as their ongoing support towards the Committee. It is through the efforts of the Utilities and Environment Department, that important sustainability focused programs are developed and put into practice in the community to ensure resilience.

APPENDIX I – EAC 3-YEAR (2019-2021) WORK PLAN SUMMARY

The EAC 3-Year Work Plan is developed around the nine goals in the City's Environmental Master Plan. Committee actions are either **Provide advice to Council**, **Provide input to Admin**, or **Receive information**.

1. Manage Air Quality			
Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none">) Establish baseline of St. Albert's air quality by 2020.) Maintain air quality below Level 2 triggers (nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, fine particulate matter and ozone) as outlined in the Capital Region Air Quality Management Framework (CRAQMF) completed by Alberta Environment and Parks in partnership with the Alberta Capital Airshed (ACA). 			
Topic	2019	2020	2021
Air quality data	Receive information 2016-18 ambient air quality data (level within CRAQMF, trends, number of poor air quality days, comparison with other locales, etc.) from AEP and ACA.	Receive information 2019 ambient air quality data (level within CRAQMF, trends, number of poor air quality days, comparison with other locales, etc.) from AEP and ACA. Provide advice to Council State of the ambient air quality in St. Albert and recommend actions	Receive information 2020 ambient air quality data (level within CRAQMF, trends, number of poor air quality days, comparison with other locales, etc.) from AEP and ACA.
Citizen Science		Receive information Current citizen science and small sensor activities in St. Albert and Alberta Capital Airshed.	
Education		Provide input to Admin New public awareness opportunities (displaying live Air Quality Health Index on existing electronic boards, why we monitor, etc.)	Receive information Metrics of Idle free bylaw update
Transportation Master Plan			Provide advice to Council Air quality considerations for the TMP (postponed to 2022)

Fire Bylaw Review	Receive information Connection between air quality and rules governing wood burning	Provide advice to Council Air quality considerations for the Fire Bylaw	
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2. Reduce Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Targets:

-) Achieve 20 per cent reduction of total corporate greenhouse gas emissions from 2008 levels by 2020.
-) Achieve six per cent reduction of total community greenhouse gas emissions from 2008 levels by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Greenhouse Gases	Provide input to Admin Review of implementation plan of the Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Greenhouse Gases Emissions	Provide advice to Council Review of implementation plan of the Local Action Plan for Energy Conservation and Greenhouse Gases Emissions	
City Energy Usage	Provide input to Admin Green utilities	Provide input to Admin Disclosing energy use of City facilities (ahead of mandated disclosure in 2027)	
Transportation	Provide input to Admin Local bus route review and plan to increase ridership within Transportation Master Plan	Receive information Regional Transportation System	
Green Energy	Provide advice to Council PACE (Property Assessed Green Energy) bylaw to support financing of green energy upgrades		

3. Promote Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Transportation Choices

Targets:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">) Achieve a minimum density of 30-40 dwelling units per net residential hectare for new neighbourhoods.) Achieve a minimum of 30 per cent for medium- and/or high-density residential until for new neighbourhoods.) Increase transit ridership equal to or greater than the overall rate of population growth of St. Albert. 		
Topic	2019	2020	2021
Municipal Development Plan	Receive information Net zero residential development (Council Priority 6.3)		
	Provide input to Admin Municipal Development Plan updates		
Transportation		Receive information Active transportation implementation	Provide input to Admin Review and update Transportation Master Plan (postponed to 2022)

4. Preserve and Manage Trees, Parks and Natural Areas

Targets:

-) Measure existing tree canopy cover and set future targets.
-) Protect top three priority natural areas in the undeveloped areas of St. Albert.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Climate Resiliency		Receive information Climate Resiliency Plan	
Trees	Receive information Urban Forest Management Plan		Provide advice to Council Urban Forest Management Plan (tree canopy targets, incentives, etc.) – need confirmation from PW on timeline
Natural Areas	Receive information Grey Nuns White Spruce Park projects update		Provide advice to Council Conservation Reserve Strategy (postponed to 2022)
Municipal Development	Provide input to Admin Preservation of trees through conservation reserve within Municipal Development Plan	Provide input to Admin Review management plans of alignment	

5. Reduce Garbage to the Landfill

Targets:

-) Reduce garbage to the landfill to 105 kg per person per year by 2020.
-) Increase diversion rate to 75 per cent by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Waste Management	Provide advice to Council Technologies to reduce waste to the landfill (Q1) (Council Priority 6.1)	Provide advice to Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership opportunities in waste management ▪ Commercial waste disclosure plan ▪ Extended producer responsibility 	

6. Protect and Improve the Sturgeon River Watershed

Targets:

-) Create watershed group by 2015.
-) Complete a watershed management plan by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Watershed Management	Receive information Watershed Management Plan public engagement	Provide input to Council Watershed Management Plan	

7. Improve Water Quality of the Sturgeon River

Targets:

-) Reduce nutrients, pesticides and bacteria levels detected in the Sturgeon River by 2020 as measure by future River Water Quality Index.
-) Capture 75 per cent or greater of municipal winter sanding material by 2020.
-) Reduce municipal pesticide use to 0.25 kg of active ingredient (ai) per hectare or lower by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Water Quality	Receive information River water quality index		
Roads		Provide input to Admin Road sand recovery Provide input to Admin	

		Chloride use on roads	
Stormwater		Provide input to Admin Stormwater rate bylaws	

8. Reduce Water Consumption

Targets:

-) Reduce total water consumption to 200 litres per person per day by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Smart Water Meters	Receive information Water usage tracking	Receive information Impact of residents tracking water usage with online tool	Receive information Outcomes of smart water meters adoption
Water Conservation			Provide advice to Council Review of Water Conservation Bylaw (postponed to 2022)

9. Foster Community Environmental Stewardship

Targets:

-) Grow participation in the Clean and Green RiverFest, Arbor Day and Naturalization projects to 1000 participants or more by 2020.
-) Allocate funding to a total of 150 Environmental Initiatives Grant applications by 2020.
-) Develop one or more new community and/or interdepartmental partnerships each year by 2020.

Topic	2019	2020	2021
Environmental Initiatives Grant (EIG)	Provide input to Admin EIG review and brainstorming of potential initiatives / projects Provide input to Admin Update of public participation targets		
Environmental Master Plan		Provide input to Admin Update of EMP	Provide advice to Council Update of EMP