

REPORT

Energy and Climate Action

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: November 18, 2024

From: Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer
File: Doc# 2522484
09.1742.02

Item #: 2024-643

Subject: **Local Government Climate Action Program 2023 Reporting Year and Program Funding**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT staff be directed to allocate funds received through the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) as part of the 2025 budgeting process in accordance with requirements of the LGCAP.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to notify Council that requirements under the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) have been met for the 2023 reporting year and seek direction on allocating LGCAP funds through the 2025 budgeting process.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the City of New Westminster signed the BC Climate Action Charter (Charter)¹, joining many BC local governments in the commitment to take action on climate change. Under the Charter, local government signatories commit to:

- Becoming carbon neutral in their corporate operations;
- Measuring and reporting their community's greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Creating complete, compact, more energy efficient communities.

¹ BC Climate Action Charter: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/climate-action/bc-climate-action-charter>

The Province introduced the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP) in 2008 as a financial incentive for local governments to meet Charter commitments by providing a reimbursement of carbon tax paid by a City each year. In 2021, CARIP was refreshed through a new program, the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP), to provide local governments and Modern Treaty Nations with updated standards of reporting corporate emissions and to provide predictable and stable funding for climate action.

ANALYSIS

New Westminster continues to work towards commitments in the Climate Action Charter, including initiatives to reduce emissions from corporate operations under the Corporate Energy and Emissions Reduction Strategy (CEERS), planning for complete, compact and energy efficient communities in support of the Official Community Plan and other strategic plans, and measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions, through LGCAP.

To receive funding in 2024 through the LGCAP, the City must meet the following requirements:

- Be a signatory of the BC Climate Action Charter;
- Measure and report on greenhouse gas emissions associated with providing traditional municipal services;
- Report on projects linked to one or more objectives from the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030 and the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy;
- Complete an online survey and submit a signed attestation form by the City's Chief Financial Officer confirming that all funds were, or will be, used towards climate action; and
- Post a completed PDF version of the program survey and attestation form publicly by September 30, 2024.

New Westminster met the requirements for the 2023 reporting year through completion of the LGCAP survey (Attachment 1). The survey and attestation form were made publicly available on September 23, 2024².

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue to implement the CEERS and progress towards achieving its corporate emissions reduction targets in alignment with Charter commitments. Additional actions and measures, beyond those specifically highlighted in the CEERS are required to be implemented for the City to meet the ambitious GHG reduction targets set out in Bold Step #1 Carbon Free Corporation: strive to be net zero emissions by 2030.

² New Westminster Local Government Climate Action Program Annual Reports:
<https://www.newwestcity.ca/environment/energy-emissions-and-climate-change#local-government-climate-action-program>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

LGCAP funding has been placed in the City’s Climate Action Reserve. Use of LGCAP funds is at the discretion of the City, but the projects must align with the CleanBC Roadmap and the Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy objectives.

In 2022 and 2023, the City received \$570,164 (\$285,082 annually) through the LGCAP. These funds must be spent by March 31, 2025. Starting in 2024, the Province allocated the equivalent of three years of program funding to all participants to cover the years of 2024 to 2027. In March 2024, the City received this 3-year payment of \$835,310. These funds must be spent before March 31, 2028.

The City has developed a Climate Action Decision Making Framework to aid climate action project prioritization and allocation of funds from the Climate Action Reserve. The framework supports the existing budget process which guides the City’s work planning through a climate action lens; and in turn will support identifying appropriate expenditures for the LGCAP funding. Starting in the 2025 budget year, allocation of the LGCAP funds will be supported by the Climate Action Decision Making Framework.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report and its contents have been developed by the Energy and Climate Action Department in consultation with Planning and Development, Engineering Services, Finance, Parks and Recreation, and the Emergency Management Office.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. That staff be directed to allocate received Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) funds as part of the 2025 budgeting process in accordance with requirements of the LGCAP.
- 2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend option 1

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Local Government Climate Action Program Completed Survey and Signed Attestation Form.

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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