

# REPORT

## *Energy and Climate Action*

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** December 9, 2024

**From:** Lisa Spitale  
Chief Administrative Officer  
**File:** Doc#2609730

**Item #:** 2024-703

**Subject:** **Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan**

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **THAT** the proposed resolution included as Attachment 1 to the staff report titled “Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan” regarding an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative to support the development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, be approved; and
  2. **THAT**, should the submission be successful, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Deputy Director of Climate Action be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the Government of Canada through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to submit an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative to support developing a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2023, the world experienced the hottest year since record keeping began in 1850. The last decade was the hottest on record, on average 1.18<sup>o</sup> C hotter than the 20<sup>th</sup> century average, demonstrating the urgent need for climate action, including adapting to current and future climate impacts anticipated due to historical and continued greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. British Columbia continues to face unprecedented climate events such as the 2021 heat dome, which claimed 619 lives, and flooding

during atmospheric river events, which disproportionately affect vulnerable populations in New Westminster.

In 2019, Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to reducing GHG emissions across the community in alignment with the targets set out by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); 45% by 2030, 65% by 2040, and 100% by 2050, relative to 2010 GHG emission levels.

In response to the Climate Emergency, Council endorsed the Seven Bold Steps (Bold Steps), with associated targets, to guide the process of moving the community towards a zero-carbon future by 2050. As part of the City's ongoing efforts to reduce its contribution to climate change, the City adopted an updated Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP 2050) in 2022. A key action identified in the CEEP 2050 to build climate resiliency in the City is to:

*5. Natural Systems – Action 1: Develop an adaptation strategy that outlines principles and actions to mitigate climate related risks and build climate resilience, emphasizing natural capital and opportunities for ecological benefits.*

## **ANALYSIS**

The Climate Action Team has been drafting a scope of work for the development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CCARP). The CCARP will define the City's path towards adapting, preparing for, and building resilience for current and future climate impacts throughout the City's corporate operations and the community, for all demographics, over a 25 year horizon. The CCARP intends to be a living document to account for uncertainty in climate projections and local climate impacts, and staff plan to report out annually on the outcomes of the CCARP once implemented. Recognizing that the City operates an electric utility, the project will consider the roles of both municipal service and energy provider in community resilience. A summary of CCARP project outcomes include:

- *Comprehensive and Flexible Framework:* Develop a strategic, living document that consolidates existing adaptation efforts, addresses gaps, and remains adaptable to future uncertainties, including emerging technologies and opportunities.
- *Health, Equity, and Reconciliation:* Enhance community health, safety, and equity by prioritizing vulnerable populations, while integrating reconciliation and decolonization principles into climate adaptation and resilience efforts.
- *Climate-Informed Risk Management:* Conduct a high-level climate-informed Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA), identifying immediate risks and informing medium and long-term infrastructure planning, asset management, and business continuity using best practices.
- *Actionable and Aligned Implementation:* Identify specific actions for near-term implementation (5-10 years) while ensuring alignment with existing City plans

and broader climate strategies at federal, provincial, national, and international levels.

- *Interest Holder Engagement and Leadership*: Collaborate and engage with vulnerable populations, equity-deserving groups, and the community to help develop a plan that reflects shared risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation needs, positioning New Westminster as a leader in climate resilience.
- *First Nations and Indigenous Peoples Collaboration*: Collaborate and engage with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations throughout the development of the CCARP to reflect and understand of their values and priorities for climate action and adaptation.
- *Proactive Low Carbon Resilience*: Equip the City to adapt to current and future climate hazards through a multiple systems approach that minimizes maladaptation by integrating opportunities to reduce GHG emissions, and safeguards physical, technological, and community infrastructure and services from the impacts of climate change.

Staff from Climate Action, Engineering, Engagement, Emergency Management Office, and Parks and Recreation collaborated to draft the CCARP scope of work and a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek consultant assistance to develop the Plan will be posted in Q1 2025. Climate Action staff shared the scope of work broadly across the organization, as all teams could be implicated by the Plan and affected by climate change, and have specific operational experience and knowledge that must be considered in developing the Plan. Staff will review proposals from qualified consulting firms and seek to formally kick off the CCARP development in Q1 2025. Development of the CCARP is anticipated to be completed in Q2 2026.

#### Climate-Ready Plans Grant Opportunity

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund (GMF) has launched a new granting stream, the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative, offering funding to municipalities for developing climate-ready plans and processes<sup>1</sup>. This grant supports initiatives such as climate adaptation plans, vulnerability assessments, and integrating climate considerations into existing processes. The fund aims to enhance municipal resilience to climate risks while promoting sustainable practices. New Westminster may be eligible to receive a stackable amount of 60% - 100% of eligible costs up to \$105,000 in funding to support development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

To qualify for funding, proposed activities must support a community in implementing measures that reduce impacts from climate-related events and hazards and must be completed within two years from grant approval. Staff's analysis indicates that development of the CCARP meets the eligibility criteria for this grant and pending

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<sup>1</sup> FCM GMF Climate-Ready Plans and Processes Funding Stream:  
<https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding/climate-ready-plans-processes>

Council endorsement, an initial application is ready to be submitted to the climate-ready plans and processes stream by the deadline of December 10, 2024.

While awaiting decision on the grant, work on developing the CCARP can continue and will be eligible for grant funding, if awarded. Staff anticipate a decision on funding within six months of the application date.

**NEXT STEPS**

Pending Council’s direction, staff will prepare and submit an application to the FCM fund by the deadline and work alongside FCM advisors to progress through the funding application approval process. Simultaneously, staff will review proposals received by qualified consulting firms in Q1 2025 to support development of the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, and will report back to Council with outcomes of the Plan’s phases of development.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

A key action identified in New Westminster’s Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP 2050) is to develop an adaptation strategy that outlines principles and actions to mitigate climate related risks and build climate resilience, emphasizing natural capital and opportunities for ecological benefits.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Through the 2024 budget, \$100,000 was approved to support development of the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan. Due to limited staff resources in 2024, while the Climate Action Team was in a recruitment phase, the full 2024 allocated budget will be carried forward to 2025.

If the FCM grant is approved, any funding received will help to offset funds allocated to this project from City reserves. The total project budget is subject to the result of the RFP which will be posted in Q1 2025. Development of the CCARP will be assessed through the Climate Action Decision Making Framework to determine if further funding to support development and implementation of the Plan could be allocated from the Climate Action Reserve Fund.

Should the submission to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative be successful, the City would be required to enter into a funding agreements with the Government of Canada. The agreements are standard form agreements provided by the Federal Government through FCM and include an indemnity and release in favour of senior levels of government.

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

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

**OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. That the proposed resolution included as Attachment 1 to the staff report titled “Funding Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan” regarding an application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative to support the development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan, be approved; and
- 2. That, should the submission be successful, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Deputy Director of Climate Action be authorized to enter into a funding agreement with the Government of Canada through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- 3. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Options 1 and 2.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Att. 1 -Proposed City Council Resolution Supporting an Application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Initiative to support the Development of a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan.

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
Laura Sampliner, Manager of Climate Action

This report was reviewed by:  
Leya Behra, P.Eng., Deputy Director of Climate Action  
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Gary So, Senior Manager of Financial Services

This report was approved by:  
Lisa Leblanc, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer