

February 5, 2018

Campbell River gets national recognition for bold climate change combat efforts

The City of Campbell River has been honoured by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for efforts to tackle climate change.

The national Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program recognizes Canadian municipalities as they reach five milestones in their efforts to reduce climate change impacts and greenhouse gas emissions.

The City of Campbell River has achieved Milestone 4 for both corporate and community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The City previously achieved Milestone 1 by establishing a means of estimating current and predicting future GHG emissions. The City hit Milestones 2 and 3 by setting a reduction target and establishing an action plan. Being approved for Milestone 4 means that the municipality has already started to implement the action plan.

The City of Campbell River's Sustainable Official Community Plan has a target to reduce community-wide GHG emissions by 35 per cent compared to 2007 levels by 2040. To achieve these targets, the City has introduced a number of initiatives to reduce energy use and GHG emissions.

"The City's initiatives include energy retrofits to municipal buildings, such as installing solar hot water on four municipal buildings and installing a green roof on the City Hall," says Amber Zirnhelt, the City's manager of long term planning and sustainability. "We're also working toward our targets through transportation improvements."

The City has an electric vehicle in its fleet and several hybrid vehicles. There are six electric vehicle charging stations throughout the community, with a new DC fast charger station being installed by BC Hydro and the City this spring at the Community Centre. Each year the City also increases the cycling infrastructure and sidewalks throughout the community to encourage active transportation.

"The City's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan sets us up to lead by example in promoting energy conservation, renewable energy, improved cycling and walking opportunities and many other climate friendly initiatives," says Mayor Andy Adams. "We secure external grant funding for the majority of these initiatives, and partner with School District 72, Island Health and other community organizations to work on projects that are good for our community's environment and economy."

School District 72 and North Island College have installed solar hot water, an electric vehicle charging station, and completed extensive facility energy retrofits. Between 2007 and 2016, School District 72 reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 36 per cent primarily through energy retrofits to school buildings. The new Campbell River and District Hospital uses leading edge energy-reduction technology. Campbell River has also taken action to tackle emissions from buildings in the community such as homes and commercial buildings.

"Buildings account for 26 per cent of the community's GHG emissions. The City offers energy retrofit programs and rebates, and there are numerous incentives available to help curb building emissions," says Amber Zirnhelt, the City's long range planning and sustainability manager. "These include rebates for homeowners and builders to offset renovation and new construction costs when making the switch to technologies and building materials with lower environmental impact."

To support residents in improving home energy efficiency, the City's Power Down Campbell River program offers \$250 rebates for home energy evaluations to help home owners identify energy improvement opportunities. The City will launch an incentive program for builders this April that will provide rebates for new home construction that is more energy efficient than the base BC Building Code.

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Contact: Amber Zirnhelt, Long Range Planning and Sustainability Manager

250-286-5797
