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Campbell River recognized for climate action – local initiatives respond to global concern

Campbell River is among six British Columbia communities recognized for climate action leadership and continued efforts to plan for anticipated climate change.

The City of Campbell River received honourable mention for the Rising Seas project when climate and energy awards were presented during the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) convention at the end of September. Campbell River's climate action includes extensive opportunities for community members to be involved in prioritizing adaptation options to increase community resilience, most recently in consultation related to anticipated sea level rise.

Campbell River was an early climate action community, signing onto the BC Climate Action Charter in 2007, and measuring and working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As a member of the Climate Action Accord, Campbell River has received one of the highest ratings for implementing a local action plan, recently receiving level four accreditation from ICLEI, a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments. The City has also established a home energy reduction program that offers a number of ways community members can help.

Related to this recognition, Council received an invitation to join the BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council and attend the BC Climate Institute in November. The BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council engages with all levels of government to advocate for strong climate action. The Climate Leadership Institute is a two-day workshop designed to help British Columbia mayors, councillors, and regional district directors lead or support bold climate action in their communities. This year's event will showcase a new resource, the Climate Leader's Playbook, with practical tools and levers around transportation, building, waste and land use that local governments can use to achieve a zero emission-ready community.

"At the local level, we're planning for a changing climate and implementing programs that help the community pull together to address the complex changes faced around the world," says Mayor Andy Adams. "Council appreciates the show of support by community members who participated in the global strike for climate action. We recognize the urgent need for action."

Other communities and organizations are looking to Campbell River as a leader in climate action planning and programs, and City staff frequently present guest lectures at a variety of forums, including Vancouver Island University-to share the findings of our work.

At the UBCM convention, City Council was among local governments supporting a resolution to ask the provincial government to take the lead on single use plastics, as the federal government has done.

"Council has been tracking the outcome of the 13 B.C. municipalities that have passed local bylaws banning single use plastics bags, which has been struck down by provincial courts as unenforceable and beyond municipal authority, which is why we are asking the Province to take action," the Mayor explains.

At the UBCM convention, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Michelle Mungall, praised local governments for taking action to reduce climate pollution and build a clean energy economy, with new jobs and opportunities for communities. The Community Energy Association organizes the Climate and Energy Action Awards annually in partnership with the Province of BC, Union of BC Municipalities, BC Hydro, FortisBC, and Real Estate Foundation of BC. Visit the Community Energy Association's website at <http://communityenergy.bc.ca>.

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Examples of Campbell River climate action through energy and greenhouse gas reduction:

- 2019 funding approved to complete Urban Forest Management Plan
- \$5.5 million dollars in Federal funding to create a composting facility that will divert organics from the landfill for both Campbell River and the Comox Valley. Public hearings have been conducted over the past few months, and the City is working with the Comox Strathcona Solid Waste Management Board to finalize plans to get this facility built.
- Housing growth policy review including impacts of urban sprawl versus density, with a focus on walkability
- Electric vehicle charging stations throughout the community
- Expanding transit service and cycling infrastructure
- Solar pedestrian traffic signals – first installed in 2007 and 2009, with ongoing funding since 2010.
- In partnership with Strathcona Regional District, secured funding for a \$4.6 million dollar energy upgrade at Strathcona Gardens currently being installed and will eliminate the use of ammonia, replacing it with energy efficient CO₂, and will provide a heat recovery system for the swimming pool.
- Ongoing installation of energy-efficient lighting, heating and systems at all City-owned facilities
 - interior and exterior energy-efficient lighting upgrades at the Dogwood Operations Centre and lighting and control upgrades at the Sportsplex
 - plumbing upgrades at City Hall and both fire halls
 - solar hot water at Sportsplex, downtown fire hall, RCMP building and at the Simms Creek pump station along the seawalk
- Ongoing Power Down Campbell River home energy retrofit rebate program for homeowners to increase energy efficiency
- Continuation of BC Energy Step Code Incentive Program for builders to meet energy-efficiency levels in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code
- First City Hall in Canada to install a green roof (reducing energy consumption and costs and extending service of roof, paid for with federal gas tax funding rather than local property taxation)
- Green burial options at Campbell River's Elk Falls cemetery to minimize impact on the local and global environment through direct burial (in a shroud or fully biodegradable container) without embalming or cremation. The surface of every grave is planted with locally indigenous plants, groundcover, shrubs and trees.
- Community Energy and Emissions Plan (adopted in 2011 and revised in 2016), a strategy for becoming a low-carbon community with recommendations for:
 - community energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction target
 - monitoring and reporting on implementation progress
 - prioritizing actions in the plan
 - embedding the plan into other City plans and processes
 - and providing strategies for community participation