

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 2. Improving Climate Resilience and Reducing Emissions in Existing Multi-Family Buildings

Submitted by: Councillor Klassen

#### WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver has a long history of addressing climate change going back many decades. For example, in 1990 Council received the “Clouds of Change” report which called for strong actions to reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the city. The “Clouds of Change” report helped to establish Vancouver as a leader in addressing climate change and other environmental challenges and put the city on the path to building resilient infrastructure while implementing meaningful sustainability strategies;
2. Adapting to climate change means understanding the climate we are likely to experience in the future and creating proactive plans that take advantage of opportunities and prepare for impacts. Understanding climate change and adapting to it means pursuing mitigation strategies that can reduce and/or eliminate greenhouse gas emissions and help to lessen the global impacts of climate change;
3. We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change in Vancouver, notably in the form of a warmer climate with a greater frequency of extreme weather events such as heat domes, wild fire smoke, and atmospheric rivers. These climate changes which are already in evidence have direct implications for how we heat, cool, and protect our homes from the elements. For example, warmer winters may result in reduced heating needs for our homes while warmer, hotter summers may increase how much cooling we require; <sup>i</sup>
4. Given that 55% to 60% of the carbon emissions generated in Vancouver come from the heating of water and spaces in buildings, cities such as Vancouver have a unique opportunity to take meaningful climate action at a local level through a variety of land-use, planning, regulatory, and fiscal tools: Notably by reducing and/or eliminating carbon emissions by changing how our buildings are heated, cooled, designed, and constructed; <sup>ii</sup>
5. Over the past decades, Vancouver has made numerous strides in changing how Vancouverites think about the environment and the impacts of climate change. For its part, the City has taken progressive steps to improve the sustainability of City operations, such as programs to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel use in City-run buildings and vehicles;
6. The City has also embarked upon an ambitious Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) designed to cut Vancouver’s carbon emissions by 50% by 2030: Notably by focusing on areas where the City has jurisdiction such as land-use planning, transportation, buildings, and infrastructure, and mitigations and adaptations through the enhancement and protection of natural systems;

7. The City also has almost completed its plan to transition to zero emissions buildings (ZEB) in all new construction by 2030 by making use of various renewable energies and setting limits on emissions and energy use in new buildings;
8. The City, in partnership with the province of British Columbia, also offers rebates and services to help those living in single family homes, duplexes, and/or townhomes to reduce emissions and make their homes more healthy and comfortable. Likewise, the City's Greenest City Grant program offers grants for place-based, community-driven initiatives that help advance sustainability, including the City of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan, while advancing equity objectives; and
9. City staff have identified a significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions on a targeted basis in older multi-family buildings in Vancouver, including rental apartments where some of the city's most vulnerable populations live without air conditioning amid hotter summers. These homes have typically fallen outside of energy efficiency programs offered for single family homes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to explore the establishment of an incentive-based pilot program, to be funded through existing budgets, that specifically targets existing and older multi-family buildings such as, but not limited to, condominium buildings, rental apartment buildings, and care homes, and to facilitate and otherwise assist the owners of these buildings to reduce their carbon emissions through energy retrofits such as installing high-efficiency electric heat pumps while also improving the cooling and indoor air quality of these buildings;

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to develop and incorporate a design challenge component for this incentive-based pilot program to enable the exploration of innovative retrofit solutions for selected buildings that can help the City to identify common barriers to the retrofitting of existing and older multi-family buildings, to demonstrate replicable innovative solutions, and to better understand the financial challenges and opportunities for owners;

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to explore partnering opportunities with other levels of government, including BC Hydro, to leverage and otherwise scale up and add to the City's available funding for this incentive-based pilot program;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to report back with recommendations to Council in 2023 on the proposed program.

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<sup>i</sup> Rising temperatures contribute to the "Urban Heat Island Effect" where dense urban areas with more impervious surfaces like concrete and tall buildings are hotter than surrounding areas. These areas are hotter because materials like concrete soak up and retain heat unlike trees, soil and other permeable surfaces.  
<https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/homes-climate.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> In Vancouver, nearly 60% of our carbon pollution comes from buildings. This is mainly from burning natural gas (which is methane, a fossil fuel), for heating our homes and our hot water. To fight climate change, the City is seeking to reduce emissions from buildings by 50% by 2030. That means ambitious actions to shift away from the use of fossil fuels in favour of equipment that uses clean and renewable energy sources.  
<https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/green-home-retrofits.aspx>