



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of May 6, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 29, 2021
From: Philip Bellefontaine, Director Engineering and Public Works
Subject: First Nations Participation in the City's Climate Change Adaptation Planning

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Approve the Community Chapter of the Climate Change Adaption Plan, and the associated Climate Action Working Group as a designated project that would benefit from First Nations input and participation.
2. Confirm that First Nations participation in this project be eligible for remuneration per the City's Committee Remuneration Policy.
3. Waive the requirement in Section D of the City's Committee Remuneration Policy for specific individuals to be appointed by Council and authorize staff to work with both the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations to select suitable participants for the City's Climate Action Working Group.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Climate Action Program is currently facilitating stakeholder engagement sessions for the development of the Community Chapter of the City's Climate Change Adaptation Plan with the support of the City's consultants, ICLEI Canada. The last Climate Change Adaptation Plan was developed by the City in 2011 and is currently being updated. For this engagement, staff have solicited the participation of various organizations in Victoria that could provide valuable input on the development of this Plan and have assembled a Climate Adaptation Working Group. Ensuring inclusion and providing opportunities to work with our Indigenous community on the Adaptation Plan is an imperative for the success.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to confirm the Climate Change Adaptation Plan as a designated project that would benefit from First Nations participation and as such, eligible for remuneration.

BACKGROUND

Adapting to the impacts of climate change presents a major societal and governance challenge made all the more difficult by the uncertainty of future impacts and issues surrounding climate justice. Knowledge systems and practices of Indigenous peoples are recognised globally as a major resource for climate change adaptation planning, but they have not been engaged consistently in

adaptation efforts and have often been neglected in policy development and planning initiatives. As such, incorporating Indigenous knowledge into the City's climate change adaptation planning process will strengthen adaptation outcomes and provide an opportunity to further strengthen the City's relationship with the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

Both climate change and colonization have had a significant impact on local Indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples will continue to be disproportionately affected by climate change and staff recommend that going forward, the Climate Adaption Plan be developed with a culturally responsive climate governance for and with Indigenous peoples. Using this approach, the future planning will acknowledge past harm that has occurred through the history of colonization and the ongoing dominance of entrenched Western governance approaches. In order to advance a more contemporary approach to climate management staff recommend the provision of remuneration for First Nation representatives to acknowledge their expertise, ideas, knowledge and connection to the land.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The City of Victoria's current Committee Remuneration Policy (Appendix A) encourages structured First Nations participation with the City recognizing the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations governments and providing compensation to their representatives for participation in City Committees, Task Forces, working groups and designated projects. In alignment with this Policy, staff are seeking Council approval to provide the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations each with remuneration for their participation in the City's Climate Adaptation Working Group to support the development of the Community Chapter of the City's Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Staff are also seeking that Council waive the requirement for specific individuals to be appointed by Council. Participation in this working group would involve up to 5 sessions, with each session requiring up to a 3 hour time commitment.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The Climate Action Program 2021 Budget has sufficient funds to support this remuneration.

CONCLUSIONS

This report describes the importance of Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations participation in the development of the Community Chapter of the Climate Adaptation Plan and seeks designation for the Climate Change Adaptation Plan as a project eligible for remuneration as per the City's Committee Remuneration Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Berndt
Manager, Energy and Climate Action

Philip Bellefontaine
Director, Engineering and Public Works

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

List of Attachments

Appendix A: City of Victoria Committee Remuneration Policy