



Council Member Motion for Governance and Priorities Committee meeting of December 18, 2014

Date: December 12, 2014 **From:** Councillor Loveday, Mayor Helps & Councillor Isitt
Subject: Declaration of the Right to a Healthy Environment

MOTION

WHEREAS the City of Victoria understands that people are part of the environment, and that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our community;

AND WHEREAS the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (2012) provides a strong policy foundation to pursue actions and initiatives that contribute toward a healthy environment;

AND WHEREAS the City of Victoria has the opportunity to be the first jurisdiction on Vancouver Island to endorse the Declaration of the Right to a Healthy Environment, joining other Canadian cities in re-affirming our commitment to social, environmental and economic sustainability;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Victoria endorses the following declaration:

“All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, including:

The right to breathe clean air;

The right to drink clean water;

The right to consume safe food;

The right to access nature;

The right to know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local environment;

The right to participate in decision-making that will affect the environment.

The City of Victoria has the responsibility, within its jurisdiction, to respect, protect, fulfill and promote these rights.

The City of Victoria shall apply the precautionary principle: where threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health or the environment exist, the City of Victoria shall take cost-effective measures to prevent the degradation of the environment and protect the health of its citizens. Lack of full scientific certainty shall not be viewed as sufficient reason for the City of Victoria to postpone such measures.

The City of Victoria shall apply full-cost accounting: when evaluating reasonably foreseeable costs of proposed actions and alternatives, the City of Victoria will consider costs to human health and the environment.

By December 31st, 2015, the City of Victoria will consider objectives, targets, timelines and actions within its jurisdiction to fulfill residents' right to a healthy environment, including options to:

Ensure equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality, preventing the development of pollution "hot spots";

Ensure infrastructure and development projects protect the environment, including air quality;

Address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures;

Responsibly increase density;

Prioritize walking, cycling and public transit as preferred modes of transportation;

Ensure adequate infrastructure for the provision of safe and accessible drinking water;

Promote the availability of safe foods;

Reduce solid waste and promote recycling and composting;

Establish and maintain accessible green spaces in all residential neighbourhoods.

The City of Victoria shall review these objectives, targets, timelines and actions every five (5) years, and evaluate progress towards fulfilling this declaration.

The City of Victoria shall consult with residents as part of this process."

AND BE IT FURTHER REVOLVED THAT Council forward this resolution to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and member local governments, requesting favourable consideration by local councils and by delegates at the 2015 annual meeting of the Association.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Jeremy Loveday



Mayor Lisa Helps



Councillor Ben Isitt

Attached:

Background: Policy Support in Official Community Plan (2012)

BACKGROUND: POLICY SUPPORT IN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (2012)

The objectives identified in the Declaration have policy support in the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (2012), including the following goals and objectives:

Ensure equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality, preventing the development of pollution "hot spots:

11 (f) "air, noise and light pollution are mitigated where possible."

Ensure infrastructure and development projects protect the environment, including air quality;

10 (a) "environmental considerations are integrated into planning and design at a variety of scales."

Address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures;

12 (a) "climate change is mitigated through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, transportation and solid waste."

Responsibly increase density;

6 (A) "Victoria has compact development patterns that use land efficiently."

Prioritize walking, cycling and public transit as preferred modes of transportation;

7 (a) "travel modes function effectively together as a system where road right-of-ways are designed and managed to give priority to pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, and commercial vehicles over single occupancy vehicles."

Ensure adequate infrastructure for the provision of safe and accessible drinking water;

11 (B) "Victoria's healthy, clean, high-quality drinking water is used in a thrifty way and maintained through generations."

Promote the availability of safe foods;

17 (a) "citizens have access to affordable, healthy and local food."

Reduce solid waste and promote recycling and composting;

11 (f) "discarded materials are managed to reduce waste at the landfill."

Establish and maintain accessible green spaces in all residential neighbourhoods.

9 (a) "a network of parks and open spaces meets citywide and local area needs, including at least one park or open space within walking distance (400 metres) of 99% of households."