

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: CLIMATEWISE BUILDING CHALLENGE

FROM:

Jim Harnum, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Council support to formally recognize the City of Vaughan as a participant in the ClimateWise Building Challenge, a program of the York Region-based Windfall Ecology Centre. The ClimateWise Building Challenge aligns with the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, and the specific Term of Council priority action to improve energy efficiency in the business sector.

Report Highlights

- The ClimateWise Building Challenge is a friendly competition that will benchmark comparable building types for select energy performance metrics.
- Participating in the Municipal Referral Group is the only new responsibility required of the City to contribute to the ClimateWise Building Challenge.
- The ClimateWise Building Challenge is a three-year program aiming to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the business sector.

Recommendation

1. THAT Council endorse City participation in the ClimateWise Building Challenge aligned with the specific action in the 2018-2022 Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan to improve energy efficiency in the business sector.

Background

The City of Vaughan was one of the Founding Members of the ClimateWise Business Network (CBN), which has a focus to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse

gas (GHG) emissions in the business sector. The CBN has 15 business members in York Region and is part of the larger Green Economy Canada consortium that includes 300 business members.

Windfall Ecology Centre, which runs the CBN program, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building sustainable communities. The Centre's activities focus on empowering communities to create lasting wealth in a carbon constrained 21st century.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

The ClimateWise Building Challenge is a friendly competition that will benchmark comparable building types for select energy performance metrics

The ClimateWise Building Challenge (or ClimateWise Challenge) is an awards and recognition program. It is a friendly competition that will benchmark comparable building types for select energy performance metrics. The initial launch of the ClimateWise Challenge will include building types from both the municipal and commercial sectors.

The ClimateWise Challenge will seek partnerships with other complementary initiatives such as the Mayors' Megawatt Challenge, Greening Health Care, and Greening Sacred Spaces, among others.

The ClimateWise Challenge is modelled after the Energy Star "Battle of the Buildings" competition, a successful U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program. The EPA program first launched in 2010 and has been continuously run and updated since.

The ClimateWise Challenge will use the Energy Star Portfolio Manager (PM) as the reporting tool to document annual energy consumption of buildings. PM is supported by Natural Resources Canada and is the reporting and benchmarking tool used by the Ontario Government for the mandatory, province-wide, commercial Energy and Water Reporting & Benchmarking (EWRB) regulation.

Design and implementation of the ClimateWise Challenge will be the sole responsibility of the Windfall Ecology Centre

The ClimateWise Challenge, as an activity of the Windfall Ecology Centre through the CBN program, will be designed and delivered by the Windfall Ecology Centre. The City responsibility consists of three (3) components:

- Recording energy consumption for facilities, which is already a responsibility undertaken by the City to comply with the Broader Public Sector regulation (O. Reg. 507/18)
- Promoting the ClimateWise Challenge to the business community through normal channels used by the Economic and Cultural Development department
- Participating in a Municipal Referral Group, which is the only new responsibility required of the City to contribute to the ClimateWise Challenge

A Municipal Referral Group will be established and consist of appointed representatives from the nine (9) local governments and York Region. Members of the Municipal Referral Group are expected to participate in a manner of mutual respect and consideration, to learn new things, and to share their own knowledge. The Municipal Referral Group will work towards the vision of the ClimateWise Challenge program and provide support and guidance on the municipal sector program design and delivery, including the following:

- Municipal building assets to be included in the ClimateWise Challenge
- Recognition categories and criteria based upon energy performance metrics related to the Portfolio Manager tool
- Recognition categories and criteria not related to Portfolio Manager
- Co-ordination of building data input, verification, and standards
- Collaboration on identification of resources and tools to support municipal participation
- Feedback from municipal members to ensure the competition is aligned with and advances community and corporate energy plans and programs
- Feedback and input on education and outreach approaches such as webinars, resource packages, workshops, action plans and incentive programs to engage commercial participation in ClimateWise Challenge
- Support and feedback on communication activities to build awareness in the broader community
- Encouragement of local utility providers and related partners to broadly support the program implementation

Windfall Ecology Centre has secured funding for the program for 36 months from July 2020 to deliver the ClimateWise Challenge and specific responsibilities include:

- Three-year program design including strategies to engage commercial and MUSH (municipal, university, schools, hospitals) sectors

- Delivery of three (3) annual recognition events as part of the York Region Sustainability Awards (YRSA) event
- Delivery of annual educational and technical workshops respecting energy reductions strategies, use of the PM reporting tool and other technical matters
- Website development and management including registration page and support resources
- Preparation of Annual Reports

The ClimateWise Challenge is an opportunity to implement a Key Activity in the Service Excellence Strategic Plan to improve energy efficiency in the business sector

Improving energy efficiency in the business sector is a Key Activity in the Service Excellence Strategic Plan under the theme of “building the low carbon economy and a resilient City”. The Key Activity has been implemented largely through partnerships with the ClimateWise Business Network and Partners in Project Green.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts to the City beyond the regular operations of the three main departments (Facility Management, Economic and Cultural Development, and Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability) that will contribute to the ClimateWise Challenge.

The ClimateWise Challenge is expecting in-kind contribution from the staff contributing to the Municipal Referral Group as well as in-kind hosting of event space as required. The CBN also hopes to build upon the current communications channels offered by the City to increase awareness of the ClimateWise Challenge.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

In November 2020, the Federal government tabled the *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act* to legislate Canada’s goal of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. Membership in the ClimateWise Building Challenge also contributes to the Green Economy Canada initiative and broader climate action targets.

Conclusion

The appropriate protocols and staff in the Facility Management and Economic and Cultural Development departments are already in place to document facility energy consumption and communicate the ClimateWise Building Challenge to the business sector. In addition, the Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability department manages the partnership with the ClimateWise Business Network as one element in support of the Term of Council priority to build the low carbon economy and a resilient

City. Hence, the ClimateWise Building Challenge continues the City's partnership with the ClimateWise Business Network to implement a Key Activity in the Service Excellence Strategic Plan related to improving energy efficiency in the business sector.

For more information, please contact Tony Iacobelli, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8630.

Attachments

None

Prepared by

Tony Iacobelli, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, ext. 8630

Approved by



Mauro Peverini, Chief Planning Official

Reviewed by



Jim Harnum, City Manager