

A plan to protect Penticton's blue skies

(Penticton, BC – September 7, 2021) – An analysis of Penticton's greenhouse gas emissions found that levels increased by as much as **22 per cent** since the City introduced its first Community Climate Action Plan in 2011. The analysis was completed as part of work on a new Community Climate Action Plan now underway and will be reviewed with Council at their Sept. 7 meeting.

"Obviously it's very disappointing to see our emission levels increase, but not surprising," said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. "If we want to protect our beautiful blue skies, we need to take the climate emergency seriously and the new Community Climate Action Plan will give us the guidance we need to do our part to reduce emissions."

The focus of the analysis is on emissions generated by the community, excluding industry. The analysis looks at the three main sources of community emissions including transportation, buildings and waste. Transportation emissions make up the greatest percentage of total emissions at nearly 55 per cent of the 250,000 tCO₂ emitted in Penticton annually. Inefficient buildings are the second highest source of greenhouse gas emissions at about 31 per cent. Emissions from waste account for the remaining 14 per cent.

Identified as a Council priority for this term, the new plan will set targets and recommend best practices and Penticton-specific solutions to help reduce emissions in the three areas. Work on the plan began last October and involved the City's Community Sustainability Advisory Committee, First Things First Okanagan and other key stakeholder groups. A draft of the plan has now been prepared based on this involvement and is ready for the community to review.

"After the wildfire threat and smoky skies we endured this summer, I hope that everyone will get involved and consider what we can each do to reduce our contribution to climate change," said Mayor Vassilaki.

The City has a number of activities planned and resources available to support involvement of the community in the creation of the plan. Between Sept. 8 and 26, community members will have the opportunity to:

- Read background materials, infographics and watch a video presentation
- Review and comment on the draft plan
- Complete a survey to share your views
- Drop by a series of pop-up events to discuss the direction of the plan

All of the materials are available on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca. Paper versions are also available the City's engagement kiosks at City Hall and the Public Library. Dates and locations of the pop-up events are available on the website and will be promoted through social media and local media. The City is also planning activities to involve the voices of youth in the process.

In addition to the City-led activities, staff will also be participating in two important community-led events to raise awareness of the climate emergency. On Sept. 8, First Things First Okanagan is hosting a walk to raise awareness of the need for climate action. Members of the community are invited to walk along Main Street between 11:30 am and 1:30 pm beginning at the library and ending at Gyro Park. The City will have a booth set up at Gyro Park between 11 am and 2 pm to discuss the draft plan and gather feedback. First Things First Okanagan is also planning activities in support of the Global Climate Strike planned for Sept. 24. Details are still to be confirmed.

All of the feedback gathered will be used to confirm the direction of the plan. A final version of the plan is expected to be ready in November. Funding for the plan was received from FortisBC and the Province's Emotive program.

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