City of Winnipeg Executive Policy Committee - May 16, 2023 Meeting

Recommendation - Use Community Energy Investment Roadmap (CEIR) to guide Strategic Priorities Action Plan

In July 2022 Winnipeg's City Council unanimously adopted the *Community Energy Investment Roadmap to Reach Net Zero Emissions by 2050* report (**AKA the CEIR Report**). Thank you Councillor Mayes for bring it forward. In my estimation, this is the most important document that has been put before Council in the 16 years that I have been working on civic affairs related to climate change.

The CEIR Report was commissioned to create a technical, evidence-based roadmap to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. It used state-of-the-art modeling to propose and evaluate a pathway to a Net- Zero Scenario (NZS). It recognizes that achieving this net-zero objective will involve the mobilization and coordination of every city department, business, non-profit organization, household, and other levels of government.

The actions highlighted by the CEIR Report align with the six pillars of OurWinnipeg 2045: leadership and good governance; environmental resilience; economic prosperity; good health and well-being; social equity; and city building. The CEIR Report illustrates the scale of the transformation required to meet the City's climate goals set out first in the City of Winnipeg Climate Action Plan and updated in the OurWinnipeg 2045 development plan. It touches on every aspect of the city, from land-use planning to waste management, from transportation to housing and from the electrical system to urban forests.

From the CEIR Report Summary: "In the era of accelerating climate change, every tonne of GHG emissions matters and an emissions reduction lens will need to permeate throughout City decision-making processes. The roadmap identified in the CEIR is intended to ensure that the City of Winnipeg's response to climate change is transformational, equitable, and effective."

The CEIR Report was intended to inform the Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) 2022-26 process. The CEIR Report should have become a guiding document for the SPAP. However, this fundamentally important report **isn't even mentioned** in the current draft SPAP.

This Committee, this Council, and all citizens have an obligation to move away from business as usual - to build climate resilience and to move away from our reliance on burning fossil fuels. Time is running out.

However, as CEIR points out and quantifies - not only will achieving this objective help to prevent future suffering - it would provide tremendous economic and social benefits.

I understand that Councillors are continuously challenged with a multitude of demands for their and the City's attention. I sympathize and admire you for taking on public service and for giving attention to those demands. However, the CEIR Report outlines how comprehensive, energetic, determined climate action will provide many benefits beyond addressing climate change.

The Benefits

These are key insights identified in the CEIR Report and, if undertaken, would benefit the Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP):

- **Climate action is a good investment** - The implementation of the Net-Zero Scenario (NZS) requires an average investment of around $800 million per year until 2050. This investment pays for itself two times over and provides a net benefit to the community of $35.6 billion over 28 years. From an economic perspective, climate action is a no-regret policy with many opportunities for new and existing businesses.
- **Households save money** - The NZS involves shifting away from natural gas, diesel, and gasoline to electricity, using high efficiency space heating and cooling with heat pumps, and improving the efficiency of homes. In the NZS, an average household in 2050 will spend 56% less on fuel and electricity than they would have in the Business as Usual (BAU) scenario. This would go a long way to reducing energy poverty.
- **Health benefits** - There will be health benefits from the reduced air pollution when we stop burning diesel, gasoline, and natural gas,
- **Employment opportunities** - The CEIR Report estimates 103,000 person-years of employment for the NZS over the BAU between 2022 and 2050.
- **Electricity is local** - Manitoba needs to pay to import fossil fuel. The NZS focuses on a resilient and flexible electrical distribution system that enables households and businesses to install heat pumps and to charge vehicles, and to generate and source clean, local electricity.
- **Building retrofits** - Building retrofits stimulate employment, address energy poverty, and improve living conditions for vulnerable populations.
- **Implementation can address equity** - The CEIR Report recommends that an equity lens be applied to decision-making on both the approach to implementation and the costs of inaction.
- **Apply a Climate Test for decision making** - Any investments or policies that the City undertakes which result in increased emissions will become stranded investments that are costly to undo. Therefore, it makes sense that all departments asses any proposed action or initiative to determine if it would decrease or increase emissions. If an evaluation indicates increased emissions, the project or policy should not proceed.
- **A whole-city approach** - The CEIR Report outlines a systematic transformation of the built environment, as opposed to a long list of actions. This means embedding the consideration of climate into every policy and expenditure in alignment with the NZS, a whole- city approach.

The City of Winnipeg cannot achieve the net-zero objective on its own. But it absolutely must accept its responsibility to contribute its share. The federal government has signalled its intention and is making moves toward this net-zero goal. Manitoba's Climate Action Team has been developing a set of documents that have been focused on the actions that need to take place at the provincial level to complement and support the CEIR Report recommendations.

Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, it is incumbent upon this committee to recommend that the Strategic Priorities Action Plan be revised to incorporate the Community Energy Investment Roadmap as its guide, as its metric for performance, and as its measure of success.