



MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK

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Special Meeting of EPC on the draft Budget, City of Winnipeg Dec 10 2021

Since 1988, the Manitoba Eco-Network (MbEN) has promoted positive environmental action by supporting people and groups in our community. MbEN's programming focuses on policy advocacy, engagement in consultation processes and developing capacity building tools that benefit the environmental non-profit sector and our member groups.

First we like to thank the Mayor, Council and the Public Service for adopting Winnipeg's first ever Poverty Reduction Strategy. However, and as stated by Make Poverty History for which we are a member organization of, we stress the need for this plan to come with additional human resources and finances in order to implement fully and effectively.

Secondly, the Manitoba Eco-Network, was one of 90 groups plus, recently urging the City of Winnipeg to play an increased role in climate action.

These efforts will require additional support. Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan needs more people designated to work on it, and this work should be accounted for more prominently through the Chief Administrative Office.

As mentioned earlier in today's meeting, a letter with over 90 organizations and businesses, was sent to Mayor and Council. Sustainable Building Manitoba eloquently highlighted in detail the 3 asks in the letter, I will briefly restate:

- 1) The Office of Sustainability (OOS) should report to the highest level possible within the city to ensure that climate action is a central component in all decisions going forward. We suggest they report to the City's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

This restructuring could potentially help alleviate any additional policy challenges brought on to the Director of Works and Water, and the important work the City is carrying out in regard to implementation of our Combined Sewer Overflow Plan, our 3-phased upgrade of the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant, rehabilitation and stabilization of our riverbanks and expansion of our waste diversion programs.

- 2) To be successful in meeting its climate targets, and to reflect the importance of climate action and other matters of environmental stewardship, the Office of Sustainability needs substantially more personnel and budget resources.

- 3) Include a Community Advisory Council and coordinator position within the Office of Sustainability.

To pick up on Councilor Mayes comment, while working groups can be and have been effective in certain situations, a public community advisory council would be much more transparent and inclusionary in helping Winnipeg implement its Climate Action Plan and other environmental programs, policies and plans; and as Councilor Rollins stated, improve the overall coordination at a high level of City governance.

Over two years ago, the City Public Service asked for resources to create a Climate Reserve Fund, the hiring of additional staff within the Office of Sustainability and the development of a Climate Resiliency Strategy. Unfortunately, that ask was not approved by Council in the Budget deliberation process.

To understand the United Nations Universal Value of LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND, it is imperative that Winnipeg acts sooner, than later, to initiate a poverty reduction strategy and include a climate resiliency plan with actions that address energy poverty, extreme weather events, as well as the expansion of our green and natural infrastructure, including maintaining our tree canopy.

To highlight what Climate and Environmental Justice is NOT, inner city residents and lower income families and individuals are situated in areas of the City that have less green space, less trees, less parks, less trails, less dedicated bike routes, less recreational amenities, less gardens, less biodiversity, more concrete, more pollution, more traffic, more industrial zoning, more brownfields, more contaminated sites, and more noise.

Since COP26, it has become evident that we have limited time to decarbonize the entirety of Winnipeg's operations by 2050 to align with the IPCC's and Government of Canada's goals of limiting global warming to 1.5 C.

In closing, I agree with Councilor Eadie's assessment today, in that this budget is the right time to set an even more positive direction for the new Mayor and Council that we will have next fall.

Thank you all for your time today and your dedication to public office.

Respectfully, Glen Koroluk
Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network