

Purpose

The Terms of Reference for the Climate Action and Energy Plan Reserve Fund address the management of, and expenditures to support corporate and community projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or enhance the Municipality's resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Allocation of Funds

The Climate Action and Energy Plan (CAEP) and Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Strategy (Adaptation Strategy) outline the action areas for fund allocation. The CAEP outlines mitigation efforts addressing the cause of climate change by focusing on reducing energy use and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. building energy efficiency, transportation, industrial or agricultural emissions etc.). The Adaptation Strategy addresses the impacts of climate change by addressing climate hazards associated with climate change (e.g. wildfire-risk reduction, extreme-heat adaptations, climate-resilient infrastructure upgrades etc).

The CAEP Reserve Fund will support corporate and community projects that directly reduce energy use or greenhouse gas emissions, offset corporate emissions, or implement climate resiliency actions identified in the Adaptation Strategy.


Applicant and Project Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must adhere to all of the following eligibility criteria:

1. Located in the Municipality of North Cowichan, or alternatively, provide a service which primarily benefits the residents of the Municipality of North Cowichan.
2. Demonstrate sound financial and administrative management.
3. Demonstrate a financial need.
4. In compliance with all relevant Municipality of North Cowichan bylaws and provincial legislation.
5. Registered as a society under the *BC Society Act*, or as an association under the *Cooperative Association Act*.

Only applicants that meet the mandatory eligibility criteria listed above will be advanced to the evaluation stage.

In addition to the conditions above, applicants must demonstrate that their project meets the following conditions to be eligible:

1. Address one or more of the actions listed in the CAEP and/or Adaptation Strategy.
 2. Be economically beneficial, highly visible, innovative or collaborative;
 3. Be accompanied by a business case, or at minimum, include a breakdown of the project budget and targets or metrics as to how the outcomes of the project will be measured.
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In general, applicants should reflect the guiding principles of: flexibility, sustainability, transparency, high visibility, innovation and collaboration.

Funding Categories

All proposals must be submitted before the intake deadline of September 15. Funds will be expended from the CAEP Reserve Fund in one of 3 ways:

1. Corporate loans
2. Corporate grants
3. Community grants.

1) Corporate Loans (to North Cowichan)

Council may make non-interest bearing loans from the reserve fund for municipal projects that facilitate implementation of the CAEP and Adaptation Strategy. Staff will calculate energy savings and emission reductions and propose annual repayment terms accordingly. In most cases, loans should be repaid within 10 years. In the event that energy costs increase significantly, operating budgets may need to be increased or the loan repayment term extended. Corporate projects will be vetted by the Environmental Services Division and, if viable, staff will present projects eligible for corporate loans directly to Council for consideration through the budgeting process.

2) Corporate Grants (to North Cowichan)

Council may approve non-repayable grants from the reserve fund for studies or to fund projects that have a return on investment greater than 10 years, leverage external funding, or support municipal adaptation to climate hazards identified in the Adaptation Strategy. Corporate projects will be vetted by the Environmental Services Division and, if viable, staff will present projects eligible for corporate loans directly to Council for consideration through the budgeting process.

3) Community Grants

Council may also provide grants for projects or assessments that work towards reducing the community's energy use or emissions. All community grant proposals must directly or indirectly address action items listed in the CAEP and/or implement actions in the Adaptation Strategy that reduce community exposure to climate hazards. Community Grant proposals must adhere to the Applicant and Project Eligibility Criteria within these Terms of Reference.

The Environmental Advisory Committee will review and score all community grant proposals using this evaluation criteria and then provide recommendations to Council. If approved by Council, successful proponents will be notified within 14 days of adoption by Council and funds will be dispersed to successful applicants once the annual financial plan is adopted by Council. While the focus of the Community Grants will be to meet the target intake date of September 15 each year, consideration will also be given to worthy projects, which meet the eligibility criteria, submitted after the main intake date.

The Chief Administrative Officer, or designate, is also authorized to expend a maximum of 10% of the balance of available funds (not exceeding \$20,000 per occurrence) for actions that support corporate

emissions reductions but may not directly result in reductions (e.g., feasibility studies and environmental outreach).

Reporting

North Cowichan Staff will provide an annual report, accounting for all transactions in to, and out of, the Climate Action and Energy Plan Reserve Fund to the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Corporate and community grant recipients must provide a progress report and presentation to the Environmental Advisory Committee within 12 months of disbursement of funds.

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