

NEWS RELEASE

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Hotter, drier summers. Warmer, wetter winters. Nanaimo adapts to climate change

The City's Climate Change Resilience Strategy looks ahead to 2050

Summary

On June 22, 2020, Nanaimo's City Council adopted a new Climate Change Resilience Strategy. The strategy takes a close look at the impacts of global warming on Nanaimo's ecosystems and infrastructure. In Nanaimo, the effects of climate change are already recognizable. Average annual temperatures have been rising and there have been an increase in the number of extreme weather events, such as the Nanaimo Lakes wildfire in August 2018 and a severe windstorm in December of the same year that left over 150,000 people on Vancouver Island without power.

Looking ahead to 2050 and Nanaimo's future, the strategy predicts that we need to be ready for a further increase in temperatures, more days of rainfall in the fall through spring, extended dry periods during the summers, flooding that could overwhelm our stormwater system, wildfire and consequently wildfire smoke and other extreme weather events.

As well as analyzing and comparing our environment today versus 2050, the strategy is proactive. It identifies 60 action items across 6 thematic areas that will help the City and community prepare for and respond to the impacts of climate change. The thematic areas are:

- Water Supply
- Flooding & Drainage
- Environment, Parks & Recreation
- Well-being & Preparedness
- Land Use & Buildings
- Corporate Governance & Mainstreaming.

The strategy looks at the science behind climate change and also identifies specific areas of risk to Nanaimo. It's meant to be a roadmap to identify and guide us as our region changes. It will be updated every five years to incorporate leading science and any changing needs of our community.

This Climate Change Resilience Strategy is being recognized beyond our community and has been nominated by the Community Energy Association and its partners for a 2020 Climate & Energy Action Award. Awards will be announced at the upcoming Union of BC Municipalities convention.

Strategic Link: Looking at climate change and the City's resilience to it is a part of Council's commitment to Environmental Responsibility.

Key Points

- The Climate Change Resilience Strategy identifies 60 action items spanning over six thematic areas: Water Supply; Flooding & Drainage; Environment, Parks & Recreation; Well-being & Preparedness; Land Use & Buildings; and Corporate Governance & Mainstreaming.
- The strategy predicts that Nanaimo's future will see more days of rainfall in the fall through spring, extended dry periods during the summers, flooding that could overwhelm our stormwater system, wildfire and consequently wildfire smoke and other extreme weather events.
- This Climate Change Resilience Strategy is being recognized beyond our community and has been nominated by the Community Energy Association and its partners for a 2020 Climate & Energy Action Award. Awards will be announced at the upcoming Union of BC Municipalities.

Quotes

"To get a full picture of how our city will be affected by climate change, we need to look ahead. Over the next 30 years, our average daily temperature will be rising. It's slow and predictable. We can also predict the coming of more extreme storms and flash weather events. But where the storms hit and how hard they hit is nearly unpredictable. This Climate Change Resilience Strategy helps us look closely at our infrastructure, our response plans and ways to help mitigate the impacts of these events. We're steadying ourselves now so that we can brace ourselves later."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"Climate change isn't just inevitable; it's underway. The extreme weather events that we're seeing in the rest of Canada and around the world - flooding, extreme windstorms, long droughts with increased wildfire risk - are slowly becoming more of a problem in Nanaimo as well. By looking ahead to 2050, we can take steps to prepare and adapt to change, as well as steps to help reduce our overall carbon footprint."

Ben Geselbracht
Councillor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- This strategy was created following a series of workshops with key stakeholders and a staff working group.

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