



December 1, 2023

Mayor and Council
13450 104 Avenue,
Surrey, BC
V3T 1V8

Re: Assessment of Surrey's Climate Change Action Strategy: Positive Attributes and Areas for Improvement

Surrey's Climate Change Action Strategy exhibits positive attributes, showcasing a commitment to sustainability through the promotion of high levels of the Energy Step Code (ESC) for new buildings. The strategy wisely avoids aggressive timelines, allowing flexibility for the HVAC industry to adapt, train, and develop capacity cost-effectively. This approach not only prioritizes environmental considerations but also recognizes the need for a smooth transition within the industry.

The city demonstrates leadership by setting clear and ambitious interim targets for 2030, emphasizing accountability and progress tracking in both corporate and community climate goals. Unlike many strategies, Surrey's approach extends beyond operational energy use, considering climate action across the entire life cycle of emissions, thereby addressing a broader spectrum of environmental impact. This comprehensive perspective reflects a commitment to holistic environmental responsibility, aligning with the city's role as a leader in sustainable development.

Acknowledging equity gaps in the implementation of climate action, Surrey recognizes the high costs associated with most low-carbon solutions. This reflects a commendable effort to ensure that the benefits and burdens of sustainability initiatives are distributed equitably among the community. By acknowledging these challenges openly, Surrey sets the stage for proactive measures that address socio-economic disparities and promote a more inclusive and just transition to a low-carbon future.

The strategy also showcases a solid effort in community engagement, actively involving and listening to various stakeholders, including businesses, industries, and residents. This inclusive approach is essential for garnering support and ensuring the success of the climate action plan. By valuing diverse perspectives, Surrey creates a framework for collaborative decision-making, fostering a sense of ownership among community members for the shared goal of sustainability.

However, there are areas for improvement in the strategy. The optimization of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) is not adequately addressed, with the plan overlooking its potential for decarbonizing buildings. Outdated characterizations of RNG as rare and limited in supply need revisiting, given the current availability and potential for expansion. A reassessment of the plan's stance on RNG could unlock valuable opportunities for achieving emissions reduction targets through innovative and sustainable solutions.

In the equity discussion, the plan could benefit from addressing the importance of energy choice in supporting competition, innovation, and affordability. Notably, job creation, mentioned in CleanBC, should be incorporated into Surrey's strategy for a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. By integrating job creation into the sustainability narrative, Surrey aligns economic development with environmental responsibility, creating a roadmap for a green and resilient economy.

While advocating for electrification, the plan lacks a thorough analysis of energy options, their limitations, costs, and grid capacity implications. Transparency is crucial, and Surrey should provide data on its capacity for full electrification to inform stakeholders and guide decision-making. A data-driven approach enhances the plan's credibility, ensuring that proposed electrification strategies align with the city's existing infrastructure and future capacity needs.



inclusive | innovative | independent

Collaboration is emphasized, but the plan primarily mentions BC Hydro, overlooking the contributions of other energy providers. A more inclusive approach to collaboration, involving all energy stakeholders, is essential for a comprehensive and effective strategy. By broadening the scope of collaboration, Surrey taps into a diverse pool of expertise and resources, creating a more resilient and adaptable framework for addressing the multifaceted challenges of climate change.

In exploring opportunities, the plan should address the high-cost nature of electricity and investigate strategies to enhance affordability and accessibility for businesses and residents. Furthermore, the absence of mention of RNG in the plan is a notable gap that should be addressed, given its potential contribution to decarbonization. A nuanced approach to energy costs and accessibility ensures that the benefits of the climate action strategy are shared widely, minimizing economic disparities and promoting a just and inclusive transition.

In conclusion, while Surrey's Climate Change Action Strategy showcases positive attributes, addressing these areas for improvement will enhance its effectiveness and contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future for the city. The ongoing evolution of the strategy, informed by a commitment to adaptability and inclusivity, will position Surrey as a forward-thinking and proactive leader in the global effort to combat climate change.

The Surrey Board of Trade, with over 6,000 business contacts, attracts business to Surrey and supports business in Surrey. We provide businesses and organizations with economic opportunity, workplace development and education, international trade, government advocacy, and business connections.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please contact me at 604-634-0342 or at e-mail: anita@businessinsurrey.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Huberman', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

H. Captain (Navy) Anita Huberman
President & CEO, Surrey Board of Trade