

The City of Duncan: Responding to Climate Change

At the City of Duncan we understand that, like the weather here, change happens.

The growth of our region, shifting economic opportunities, and environmental trends all affect our residents and shape our city. Duncan needs to respond to all of these changes to make sure that the city remains a healthy and vibrant place to live—a place our children will want to call home.



One of the biggest and most threatening changes right now is the shifting climate patterns caused by the human production of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels. With current trends in climate change, the future of our city, our region, and all parts of world face an uncertain future.

We experienced a local example of our vulnerability to changes in climate with the flooding of December 2009. Local residents will also long remember the snows from the winter of 2009/09. We will increasingly be subject to extreme weather events and their consequences which can include more intense droughts, winds, rain, snow, and fire.

Our region will need to adapt to some of the changes now taking place with the global climate, but it is also our responsibility to act prudently and make sure that the process of climate change does not get out of hand. The threats to our water supply, food system, and city infrastructure are serious.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to dealing with climate change, the City of Duncan signed onto the Climate Action Charter in 2008. The Charter recognizes the importance of addressing climate change and commits the signatories to significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, both in our city operations and in the wider community. Our commitments are further enshrined in the 2010 Official Community Plan update and will be reflected in City planning, development, and operations into the future.

Most of the greenhouse gas emissions for our region are carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels for transportation, electricity, and heat. By committing to reduce our emissions we will need to be more efficient, we will need to shift some of our habits, and we will need to build a city that supports things like public transit, energy efficient homes, and renewable energy production.

Dealing with climate change can seem overwhelming, but as with most problems, we need to start close to home to make a difference. At the City of Duncan, we have committed to get our own house in order first. Part of our Climate Action Charter commitment is that all city operations will be carbon neutral by 2012. This means we will need to reduce the carbon footprint of our city operations as much as possible and we will need to buy carbon offsets to balance our remaining emissions. Carbon offsets are credits that come from investing in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions where it is most cost effective.

And while dealing with climate change is a challenge, it is also a great opportunity. The city has the potential to be more efficient, to reduce long-term energy costs, to improve local air quality, and to help stimulate job creation and economic development related to the new green economy.

Below, the City of Duncan lays out its principles and commitments around the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change action. For this effort to be successful, and for us to meet our goals, we will need the support and active participation of our residents. We hope you will join with us...

Principles—

For the City

- 1. The City of Duncan will measure and report on greenhouse gas emissions related to its own operations—including its vehicle fleet, buildings, and waste.*
- 2. The City will lead by example and has committed, through the provincial Climate Charter, to carbon-neutral operations by 2012.*
- 3. Wherever feasible, greenhouse gas reductions will come from greater efficiency and conservation with a target of a 20% overall reduction by 2017. Ongoing greenhouse gas emissions, beyond 2012, will be balanced by the purchase of carbon offsets.*
- 4. The City commits to meeting high standards of energy efficiency and design for all new City buildings.*
- 5. The City will work with regional partners in the Cowichan Valley to achieve the greatest impact and to coordinate regional energy planning and projects.*

For the Community

- 6. The City will consult with local residents, business owners, and organizations to ensure a fair and effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.*
- 7. The City will work toward an efficient, compact community, integrated into a regional energy and transportation strategy, with a target for 33% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and 80% by 2050.*
- 8. The City will support individual and community-wide efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy, including assistance with information, funding, and financing where possible.*
- 9. The City will take an integrated approach to addressing climate change including actions related to building efficiency, transportation, urban trees, local food production, waste management, renewable energy, and other possibilities.*
- 10. The City will continue to track the likely impacts of climate change on the region and will undertake actions and policies aimed at climate adaptation, as required.*