

8.20. Cities Race to Zero

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Attachment 1 Cities Race to Zero Pledges [**8.20.1** - 4 pages]

PURPOSE:

This report seeks Council endorsement to join the Cities Race to Zero initiative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cities Race to Zero is a collaboration between C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Resources Institute and others. It is a global campaign run by the Presidency of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties 26 (COP26) to send governments a resounding signal that cities, regions, businesses, and investors are united in meeting the Paris goals, and in creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fees involved in joining the program and the proposed pledges align with existing work plans and budgets.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council delegate to the General Manager the authority to enter into the Cities Race to Zero.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Our Living Environment
- 1.2 North Sydney is sustainable and resilient

BACKGROUND

North Sydney Council was the 30th Australian Council to declare a 'climate emergency'. Councillors resolved on 22 July 2019 to acknowledge that climate change poses a threat to the future of our cities, including the North Sydney Local Government Area. It also called upon the State and Federal Governments to declare a climate emergency and to respond to this emergency by taking urgent action to meet the emissions reduction targets contained in the Paris Agreement.

On 26 July 2021 Council adopted its Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030 which sets targets for Council's own operations, and the community to help achieve environmental goals, including acting on Council's climate emergency declaration.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

DETAIL

To date, around 800 cities have signed up to the Cities Race to Zero, including the City of Sydney. The City's Chief Executive Officer, Monica Barone, has invited a number of councils, including North Sydney, to also sign up to the Cities Race to Zero to help establish Local Governments as global leaders on equitable climate action ahead of COP26. As a Cities Race to Zero participant, Council would also gain access to COP26 and COP-related events through the partners in the LGMA constituency, as well as formal recognition by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Lane Cove Council has made a resolution to sign up to the program and other NSROC councils including Willoughby and Kuring-gai Councils are considering the same.

To join, Council would make the following pledges:

1. Publicly endorse the following principles:
 - We recognise the global climate emergency.

- We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
- We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the centre of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.
- We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.

2. Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°Celsius.

3. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short-to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius.

4. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action as listed on citiesracezero.org that will help to place your city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5°Celsius objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022.

5. Report progress annually, beginning no later than 2022 to your usual or the recommended reporting platform.

The pledges in the North Sydney context

These principles are closely aligned with Council’s existing endorsed positions, goals and strategies. Council's public Climate Emergency declaration already mirrors the Cities Race to Zero principles and the pledge targets are in line with Council’s targets and commitments contained within its Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030, including achieving:

1. 100% of Council’s electricity needs are met by renewable energy sources before 2030
2. 100% carbon neutrality for Council operations achieved before 2030
3. 65% greenhouse gas reduction of 1996 community emissions levels before 2030

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy includes a roadmap of actions to help Council achieve its carbon reduction targets, including actions that are consistent with those listed on the Cities Race to Zero platform (see the full list of actions Council can select in Attachment 1). It is recommended that Council commits to the following actions as part of the Cities Race to Zero pledge which align with those already contained in Council’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy:

- Develop a roadmap to achieve 100% clean renewable electricity by 2030.
- Make sure your policies follow the rule of “energy-efficiency” to take actions to increase the efficiency of end-use sectors.

- Assess the impact that the choice of materials and construction design will have on your city's overall resilience to climate impacts (i.e. increasing urban heat island, impermeable surface increasing the risk of flooding, etc.).

The Cities Race to Zero annual reporting requirements are not onerous and could be achieved using Council's existing reporting mechanisms.

Conclusion

Membership in the Cities Race to Zero initiative is strongly aligned with Council's Climate Emergency declaration and is consistent with its recently adopted Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030. It would add Council's voice to a growing Local Government movement to help establish our sector as global leaders on equitable climate action ahead of COP26 global climate summit. Council would also gain access to COP26 and COP-related events through the partners in the LGMA constituency, as well as formal recognition by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, further demonstrating Council's commitment to act on its Climate Emergency declaration.

Attachment 1: Cities Race to Zero Pledge Actions

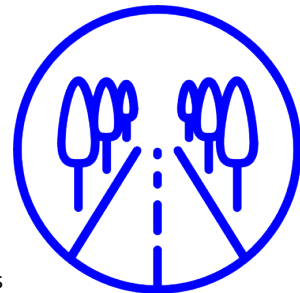
CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY



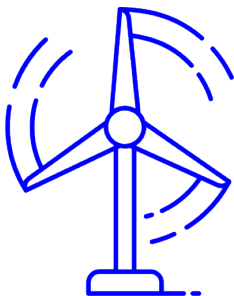
- Collect information on the needs of frontline communities (including children, workers in transitioning industries, women, refugees, etc) with respect to climate planning and/or implementation.
- Collect spatial or disaggregated data to inform the design and/or monitor the implementation of climate actions.
- Demonstrate how actions contribute to delivering social and economic benefits, to reducing inequality and to driving a just transition for workers, through carrying out a wider benefits or equity assessments for at least 2 priority city-wide transformative climate actions.
- Take action to develop 15- or 30-minute neighborhoods (also known as complete neighborhoods) all throughout the city, where residents are able to meet most of their needs within a short walk or bicycle ride from their homes.

CREATE GREEN AND HEALTHY STREETS

- Pilot test and procure, with partners as necessary, zero emissions buses by 2025.
- Expand and improve walking, cycling and integrated transit access and identify potential areas for future zero emission zones by 2025.
- Procure, with our partners, only zero emission buses from 2025.
- Implement pilot measures that restrict internal combustion engines in parts of the city by 2025 and ensure that a major area of our city is zero emission by 2030.



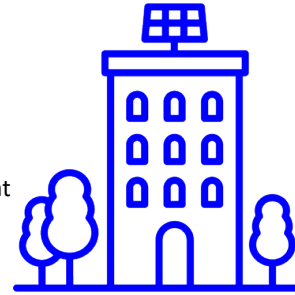
REDUCE AIR POLLUTION & ENSURE CLEAN AIR



- Establish baseline levels and set ambitious reduction targets for air pollutants that meet or exceed national commitments. These targets will put us on a path towards meeting World Health Organisation Air Quality Guidelines for particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and sulphur dioxide.
- Develop plan by 2025 to achieve pollution reductions from major sources of pollution within city/under city control and implementing at least one new substantive policy and programme to reduce pollution from top source.
- Before 2025, implement new substantive policies and programmes to address the top causes of air pollution emissions within our city and under our control by 2025.

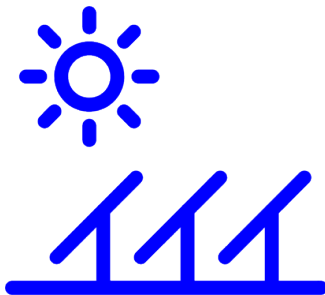
DEVELOP ZERO-CARBON BUILDINGS

- Develop a roadmap to achieve net zero carbon new buildings from 2030.
- Implement pilot efficiency programmes and incentives for building energy efficiency with tools in place that facilitate data access and data analysis (benchmarking) of building energy use by 2025.
- Develop a roadmap to achieve net zero carbon municipal buildings by 2030 and policy approval by 2025 to deliver a commitment to own, occupy and develop net zero carbon municipal assets by 2030.
- Enact regulations and/or planning policy to ensure NEW buildings operate at net zero carbon by 2030.
- Benchmark building energy use in existing buildings and implementing citywide efficiency programmes with an approved roadmap to achieve all net zero carbon buildings by 2050.
- Enact regulations and/or planning policy to ensure ALL buildings operate at net zero carbon by 2050, with a roadmap and interim emissions goals in place in 2025.



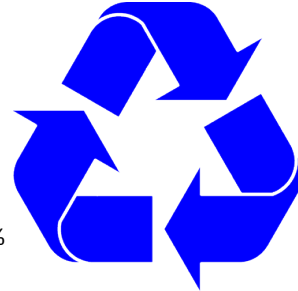
MOVE TOWARDS RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS

- Develop a roadmap to achieve 100% clean renewable electricity by 2030 and expand this to 100% renewable energy by 2050.
- Lead by example with municipal renewable energy projects maximising the potential of municipal assets for onsite generation with the aim to cover municipal electricity demand by 100% renewables by 2025.
- Make sure your policies follow the rule of “energy-efficiency” first so take all actions to increase the efficiency of end-use sectors.
- Develop financial support programs to incentivize deployment of building-scale renewables and mandate the use of renewables through building codes, while engaging residents and other stakeholders in the process.
- Incentivize large scale clean energy generation by using your purchasing power and support community energy projects.
- Promote the use of clean energy sources for heating and cooling buildings.



ADVANCE TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

- Progressively phase out organics disposal to landfill and incinerators, ie at least 25% by 2025.
- Ensure all operating and closed landfills have landfill gas capture and at least flaring (ideally local landfill gas utilization for power generation) by 2025.
- Ensure all waste generated in the city is being collected and residual waste is disposed of adequately in at least an engineered sanitary landfill.
- Reduce the municipal solid waste generation per capita achieving at least 8% reduction in 2025, with actions like restricting single use materials, and volume based collection fees/incentives like “Pay as you throw”, enroute to 15% reduction by 2030.
- Reduce the amount of municipal solid waste disposed to landfill and incineration by at least 50% compared to 2015 by 2030; and increase the diversion rate away from landfill and incineration to at least 70% by 2030, with actions like scaling up citywide collection with 3-stream segregate waste collection including food/recyclables/residual by 2025.



CREATE SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

- Pilot school feeding programs that align to locally relevant [Planetary Health Diet](#) by 2025.
- Implement policies/incentives/taxes/bans that halt or prevent the nutrition transition by 2025.
- Regulate or activate programs for food businesses to minimize food related carbon emissions.
- Expand access for all citizens to affordable, plant-based food by 2025.
- Create a food council/board with local stakeholders by 2025.
- Align our food procurement (eg school feeding programs) to planetary health diet by 2030, with at least 50% of procurement expenditure aligned to the planetary health diet by 2025.
- Reduce food loss and waste by 50% from a 2015 baseline by 2030, achieving at least a 25% reduction in food loss and waste by 2025.
- Support an overall increase of healthy plant-based food consumption in our cities by shifting away from unsustainable, unhealthy diets by 2030.



DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS & INVEST IN A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

- Advocate for fossil-free and sustainable finance by other investors and all levels of government, including by promoting the importance of strong, long-term climate policies and demanding greater transparency.
- Call on our pension funds to divest from fossil fuel companies and increase financial investments in climate solutions to help promote decent jobs and a just and green economy.
- Take all possible steps to divest our city assets from fossil fuel companies and increase our financial investments in climate solutions to help promote decent jobs and a just and green economy.



MOVE TOWARDS RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS

- Develop a roadmap with local stakeholders to halve embodied emissions in all infrastructure projects by 2030, including new build and major retrofits, and achieve zero emission construction sites by 2030.

- Make sure your policies and actions follow the rule of “existing assets” first to optimize, repurpose and retrofit existing buildings and infrastructure before building new ones.



- Lead by example by specifying low carbon materials and zero emission construction machinery in municipal procurement.

- Reward resource efficient and circular design, use of low carbon materials, and low to zero waste construction sites for all new projects and major retrofit in municipal procurement, planning permissions, policies and processes and building codes.

- Stimulate data transparency and accountability by asking for/requiring Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) in planning permissions and embedding them into planning policies, processes and building codes.

- Approve net zero emission (operational and embodied) flagship project(s) by 2025 and advocate for regional, national government and/or intergovernmental action on sources outside city control.

- Assess the impact that the choice of materials and construction design will have on your city’s overall resilience to climate impacts (i.e. increasing urban heat island, impermeable surface increasing the risk of flooding, etc.).