

Climate Change Risk Management Policy

Date:	June 27, 2016
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

A proposed Climate Change Risk Management Policy is being presented to the Toronto Public Library Board for its approval. Council has passed its own Climate Change Risk Management Policy and has requested that City agencies and corporations adopt a similar policy. This policy establishes processes and controls for systematically identifying, assessing and taking action to mitigate risks arising from a changing climate and establishes organizational roles and responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the Climate Change Risk Management Policy (Attachment 1).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this Financial Impact Statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 8, 2014 City Council adopted the Climate Change Risk Management Policy as part of the Resilient City – Preparing for a Changing Climate report. The report also recommended the following:

“Require all City Agencies and request all City Corporations to adopt the City's Climate Change Risk Management Policy or a similar policy that is consistent with the one adopted by City Council and advise the Chief Corporate Officer when such a policy has been adopted.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City's Climate Change Risk Management Policy was developed as a response to the July 2013 rain storm, the many extreme heat alerts during the summer of 2013 and the December 2013 ice storm. City staff developed an approach to ensure that climate change resilience was integrated into decision-making and co-ordination of City operations and services. The policy was designed to help the City and its communities prepare for future eventualities and become more resilient to a changing climate. The policy establishes processes and controls for systematically identifying, assessing and taking action to mitigate risks arising from a changing climate and defines roles and responsibilities.

Note that this policy is distinct from, but complementary to, both 1) the City's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and 2) emergency planning and response (including response to extreme weather events). The Climate Change Risk Management Policy is intended to help with long-term adaptations to climate change and to be proactive in regards to reducing the impacts of a changing climate.

Also note that this policy is consistent with the provincial government's Climate Change Strategy, which includes a pledge from the province to "help municipalities, public utilities and the broader public sector identify their vulnerabilities and prioritize their response to the risks posed by climate change." The Strategy also contains a vision that by 2030, "Ontario will be better prepared for the impacts of climate change" (p.32). The province's recently released Climate Change Action Plan focuses on greenhouse gas reductions. Ontario's plan for adapting to climate change and becoming more resilient will be released in 2017.

COMMENTS

The proposed policy is similar in principle to the City's. One key difference is that the City's policy is supported by three bodies: 1) Environment & Energy Division, 2) Executive Environment Team (EET) and 3) Resilient City Working Group. Each are listed in the City policy and have roles and responsibilities. There are no similar bodies at the Library. As a result, in adapting the policy for the Library, responsibility for implementation is given to the City Librarian and the Directors.

Unlike the City policy, the Library policy does not include provisions for building partnerships with the community, private sector and broader public sector and for sharing knowledge and information with outside organizations. The functions are better performed by the City since it has the resources and expertise to fulfill those specific policy goals.

Library staff met with City staff with the Environment and Energy Division in late 2015 to discuss the policy in more detail. Library staff requested resources to assist in the evaluation of climate change resilience, identification of risks and risk management.

City staff advised that they plan on reporting to Council in the third quarter of 2016 on the implementation of the policy and are hoping to include the Library's efforts as part of the report.

Staff have already taken the following measures that support resilience to climate change:

- Recent branch renovations and new branch builds have been designed eliminating basement space;
- Design of new libraries, such as Scarborough Civic Centre branch, meet the Toronto Green Standards, Tier 1;
- Existing landscaping is maintained to minimize impact to facility due to extreme weather (e.g. proper tree pruning to prevent branches falling in ice storms);
- New landscaping design taking extreme weather into consideration (e.g. account for larger volumes of rainfall);
- Library is in the early stages of business continuity planning in conjunction with the City;
- During smog alerts, vehicle travel and use of motorized equipment is minimized;
- Libraries have and will continue to serve as cooling and warming centers during extreme heat and cold events;
- Climate change may increase the frequency of climate-related “emergencies” (ex. flooding that disturbed underground contaminated soil or materials). Toronto Public Library works with the City to ensure an “all hazards” approach to emergency response. The planning for emergency response includes strategies and approaches to minimize the impact on Toronto Public Library;
- In a City-wide climate related emergency, Toronto Public Library will work in coordination with the City’s Emergency Operations Centre that is established under the direction of the city’s TEMPC - Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee.

Going forward, staff have identified the following issues that warrant further investigation in regards to climate change risk management:

- Collections maintenance and recovery;
- Vulnerability to flooding in relation to a) State of Good Repair and b) future relocation of branches;
- Resiliency of internet to extreme weather events;
- Availability and use of generators at select locations.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Climate Change Risk Management Policy

Attachment 2: City of Toronto Climate Change Risk Management Policy