




TITLE: 2011 ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE		 Page 1 of 7
PRESENTER: Tom Keep Manager of Environmental Initiatives	AGENDA NO:	
DEPARTMENT: Operational Services Division Environment Section	DATE: December 28, 2011	
CLEARANCES: Nil	ATTACHMENTS: Nil	
APPROVALS:		
 _____	Dec. 31, 2011	 _____
Department Head	Date	City Manager
		Jan. 3, 2012
		Date

SUMMARY OF HISTORY / DISCUSSION:

The City of Brandon has an Environmental Strategic Plan that was approved by City Council in November of 2007. This living document provides guidance and direction on environmental initiatives and concerns in the community. This report will provide an update with regards to many of the initiatives being addressed directly by city staff or in partnerships with other groups in the community.

The Brandon Environment Committee (BEC) is a vital component of environmental initiatives and concerns in the community. The BEC consists of a number of businesses, groups and individuals in and around the Brandon area and provides assistance and recommendations to City Council on various environmental issues. This report has also been submitted to the Environment Committee for their reference.

Environmental Strategic Plan (ESP)

The Environmental Strategic Plan (ESP) was compiled for the community with the public’s input and approved by City Council in October of 2007. The ESP is a living document and is linked to the Community Strategic Plan “*Shaping Tomorrow Together*” where the community stated their desirable future to be “*Brandon will be a recognized leader in environmental stewardship*”.

Through the ESP a series of actions are for the municipality to take over the short and long-term, to reduce the city’s negative impact on the environment. The ESP is scheduled to be revisited at the end of 2012 where the community will have the opportunity to provide their input for the future of this living document.

Recycling

The City of Brandon through its Sanitation Department is providing an educational campaign on the benefits of recycling. Recycling volumes have increased over the last few years due mainly in part to the “new” solid waste collection system and the convenience it provides to residents.

Each residential household is provided with both a recycle blue lidded bin and a conventional black lidded bin for regular garbage. The recycling pickup is done on the same day as the regular garbage. Recyclable materials are then taken to the MRF (Material Recovery Facility) building where it is rough sorted before either being sent to Winnipeg for further sorting or sold to markets directly from Brandon. The City of Brandon has a processing contract with a recycling facility in Winnipeg where the recyclables are sorted in groups before being sold to various markets.

The City of Brandon is also part of the “Recycle Everywhere” program where through the product stewardship program of the Province of Manitoba, 80 recycle bins are located throughout the city to encourage recycling of beverage containers. These bins have been provided to the City of Brandon at no cost. The Sanitation Department is responsible for emptying the containers and putting the material into the recycling stream.

Community Led Emission Reduction Program (CLER)

The CLER program is a partnership between Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC), the provincial Department of Local Government and the City of Brandon. The Department of Local Government provided funding for an employee and projects starting in the fall of 2009. BNRC and the City of Brandon partnered to have one employee to run joint programs both for the City of Brandon and as well for the BNRC catchment area. The program will run until the end of March 2012. The program is designed to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) in the community. There are a number of programs being run in the program, some of which include the following;

➤ Toilet Rebate Program

This program provided rebates to residents in the City of Brandon that switched their conventional toilets to low flow units. Each qualifying homeowner was eligible to receive rebates of \$50 per unit for up to 2 units.

➤ Brandon’s Waste Reduction School Challenge

This program partnered with the Brandon School Division (BSD) to measure the amount of recyclables and organic waste that ten classes could divert during the national Waste Reduction Week in October of 2011. The program included that each participant would receive a T-Shirt and a chance to win prizes. Each class pledged a waste reduction initiative that they would carry out for the rest of the school year, (i.e. green teams to collect organics in the school).

➤ Sportsplex Lighting Upgrade

The CLER program provided funding to assist the Canada Games Sportsplex to upgrade the lighting in the facility. The project had been identified in the Energy Audit that was performed in 2007.

➤ Sportsplex Ice Edger

Funding was provided to the Canada Games Sportsplex to upgrade its Ice Edger from a normally propane powered ice edger to an electric ice edger. This has made the arena safer for participants and spectators as exhaust fumes in the closed in arena are greatly reduced.

➤ Master Compost Program

A Master Composter Program was offered through the CLER program where people in the community would become certified Master Composters and would assist the public on the do's and don'ts related to composting. This program is beneficial because it has the potential to divert organics from the landfill and engage the community on the benefits of composting.

➤ Compost Days & Tree's For Tomorrow

In cooperation with the City of Brandon's Sanitation Department, the CLER program offered free compost in June to the public. This was held over two days and was located at the Keystone Centre (South Grounds). The public were encouraged to come down and get information on composting and to pick up free compost. In addition the organizers were able to distribute free tree seedlings of White Spruce and Hybrid Poplar's courtesy of the Tree's For Tomorrow program. The Tree's for Tomorrow program has a goal of planting 5 million trees over 5 years.

➤ Earth Day Celebrations

The CLER program assists in the running of the annual event in April. The event focuses on environmentally friendly opportunities that the public are encouraged to participate in. Many different initiatives are showcased at the event including a static display for the public to try using the new bicycle racks on the Brandon Transit buses. Brandon Transit has provided additional prizes including free bus tickets for the public to try the transit system. The event is organized by environmentally concerned citizens and is truly a community event.

➤ Rain Barrel Promotion

The CLER program provided funding to provide rain barrels to the people of Brandon on a greatly reduced cost. There were 555 rain barrels sold over 2 events. The Brandon Rotaract Club and citizens at large assisted in the two events by providing people to assist in the handling and sales. This program was very popular and sold out each time it was held. Funding from CLER included staffing and 50% cost of the barrels.

➤ Brandon Commuter Challenge & Car Pool Survey

In June of 2011 the CLER coordinator ran a community commuter challenge. A number of businesses and agencies participated in the week long challenge including the Brandon Regional Health Centre. Prizes were distributed to those participating in the event. As well, a car pool survey was completed on those wishing to participate in a voluntary survey on carpooling.

➤ Green Procurement Policy

The CLER coordinator is working towards establishing a green procurement policy for the City of Brandon. This started in the fall of 2010 and is a low in priority at the moment. This will assist the City of Brandon's Purchasing Department in implementing a policy. This was identified in the Environment Strategic Plan as one of the items identified as a project that would benefit the City of Brandon's environment internally.

➤ Brandon Transit Fare Study

Through the CLER program, funding was available to assist the City of Brandon's Transit department in conducting a fare study. The consulting firm SNC Lavalin was identified by the provincial government to receive funding for various studies. SNC Lavalin and senior management of Brandon Transit discussed various opportunities and a new fare structure is being implemented for 2012 to help encourage public transportation.

➤ Anti-Idling Initiative

The CLER program is continuing the public education component of the damage that idling vehicles have on the environment. This is done by media advertising and the placement of signage at all public locations in the community including all schools.

➤ Upgrades to City Hall Boilers

The CLER program provided financial assistance to upgrading of the two boilers at City Hall. The program had been identified in the Energy Audit that was done on all major municipal buildings in the City of Brandon in 2007.

Landfill Methane Gas Recovery

The destruction of landfill gas is continuing at the Eastview Landfill Site. The City of Brandon has contracted out to COMCOR to develop the gas field; to meet the requirements identified in the provincial legislation and to find end users. The provincial government has provided up to \$1.275 million dollars to destruct the harmful GHG related to methane. This program will continue into the future with a life expectancy of 20 to 25 years.

Water Conservation Strategic Plan

The City of Brandon is developing a Water Conservation Strategic Plan that will be presented to City Council and then submitted to the provincial government as part of the Public Utilities Board submission for licensing. The plan will focus on many opportunities for the community including conservation, quality and quantity. There are both city staff and the public assisting in compiling the plan. The committee is dedicated to *"Conserve and protect water use for present and future generations on both a community and corporate level"*.

Brandon Environment Committee (BEC)

The Brandon Environment Committee is an arm length's committee for City Council and provides information related to environmental issues in the community. The committee is made up of city staff, business representatives, public, students and a city councilor. The committee meets on a monthly basis and deals with many issues in the community.

The committee also provides funding for small environmental initiatives in the community. An upgrade to the committee's web page is underway and it is expected to provide an easier format for the public to access information.

Curbside Organics Collection

The City of Brandon participated in an 18 month pilot project related to curbside organics collection program where 500 households were involved in a scheduled pickup of their kitchen and yard waste items. Over the 12 month of pickup and the 6 month time of monitoring the Sanitation Section was able to divert over 216 tonnes of organics from the landfill.

The Sanitation Section staff had the compost product analyzed by a certified laboratory and the finished product is considered a Class “A” compost. From these findings, the Sanitation Section is considering a voluntary curbside collection program for the whole community with the potential to generate revenues from the sale of compost.

Brownfields

The City is currently investigating the number of “Brownfields” in the community. A Brownfield is defined as an abandoned or underutilized industrial, community or commercial property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Abandoned gas stations, industrial sites or operations that used questionable chemicals are considered as a Brownfield. A number of these sites were usually built during the community’s formative years, and often occupy prime locations in the downtown area. The city is working with the provincial government to address some of these locations.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The City of Brandon has a representative on the provincial committee discussing concerns related to preparing for the possible influx of electric vehicles in Manitoba communities. A report will be prepared and submitted to the provincial government addressing issues related to: INFRASTRUCTURE; BUSINESS/ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES; TECHNOLOGY & ADAPTATION and EDUCATION/PUBLIC INFORMATION & RESEARCH; REGULATIONS/INSURANCE/SAFETY; and INITIATIVES TO ACCELERATE ADOPTION. The goal is to have the report in the hands of the provincial government for their consideration.

Household Hazardous Waste Depot

Historically the City of Brandon has had the Rotary Club of Brandon oversee the operation of two Household Hazardous Waste Days during the year. The Rotary Club of Brandon gets help from the Air Cadets to off-load the many different wastes that the public drops off at the Civic Services Complex. The waste is disposed of through Miller Environmental Group in an environmentally friendly manner. The disposal costs have been paid by the provincial government.

Starting in 2012 a full time depot is being proposed by the Province to help meet the demand of disposing household hazardous materials. There are approximately 500 vehicles at each of the events. The city is currently in negotiations on the operation of the full time depot. Also in discussion is how to deal with mercury in thermostats and the disposal of medical prescriptions.

Solar Light Pilot Project

The City of Brandon is working with a high school student that has proposed more use of solar power in the community. A solar light has been installed in one of the dog parks in the city and is being monitored by the high school student for operation and maintenance. Early monitoring results are encouraging. The potential

for future uses could include remote walkway lighting and cross country ski trail lighting where traditional electrical services are limited.

Assiniboine Hills Conservation District (AHCD)

The City of Brandon has joined the Assiniboine Hills Conservation District (AHCD). The mission of the AHCD is to manage water and environmental resources to promote a healthy watershed and sustainable lifestyle for current and future generations. The vision is that in the future, communities, agriculture, and the environment are healthy, sustainable and in balance with one another. The City of Brandon representatives attended the Manitoba Conservation District Association conference which was held in Brandon in December.

Battery Recycling

The City of Brandon continues to be a part of the “Call 2 Recycle” battery recycling program. Collection boxes are located at City Hall and at the Civic Services Complex. The program includes free freight to a facility in Ontario. All types of rechargeable batteries are included in the program.

In 2011 the program expanded to all types of batteries (other than automotive) to include non-rechargeable batteries. The city is in the process of changing out of its lithium batteries for the 6,000 electronic water meters in the community and a request has been sent to “Call 2 Recycle” to see if they will accept these batteries in the program.

One 2 One with the City of Brandon Television Show

The City of Brandon has a television show on the local access television station that focuses on many topics including Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste, Fire Safety, Winter Festival and Water Conservation. The format allows an interviewer to host people in the community that have special interests or topics. The show is then broadcast on Access 12 during various times throughout the week.

Traffic Signal Lights

All traffic signal lights under the cities responsibility (21) have been converted from incandescent lighting to light-emitting diode (LED) lighting. With the funding assistance of Manitoba Hydro, the City’s Building Maintenance Electrical Section has done the conversion of both the signals and the pedestrian fixtures. In May of 2011 Manitoba Hydro contacted the City of Brandon to inform them that due to the conversion to LED technology that they have credited back to the City’s account \$20,000 due to less hydro consumption. The City of Brandon is now looking at the viability of having crosswalks converted to LED technology.

Decorative Lighting

All seasonal decorative lighting in the City of Brandon has been converted from incandescent to LED technology. Manitoba Hydro had provided funding for replacement of all of the strings of lighting. The Community Services Section is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the “Water Fall of Lights” display where the public have the opportunity to view the many displays that are sponsored by many of the businesses in the community.

Brandon Transit Upgrade of Buses

The City of Brandon’s Transit Section has upgraded its fleet of buses to include 10 New Flyer buses that are more energy efficient than the older units. These new buses have fewer emissions than the retired buses. All buses in the fleet now have bicycle racks installed to accommodate two bicycles at a time. The public can ride their bicycles one way and if it is raining can put their bicycle on the front rack and ride home in comfort.

Recycle Bins in all Offices

All offices in the City of Brandon have recycle bins to divert recyclables away from the garbage stream. This is one way that the City of Brandon has been able to increase its recyclable rate. Another way that paper has been reduced is by encouraging staff to use two sided printing on documents. Also City Council continues to go with a paperless agenda and all agenda’s and meeting minutes are available electronically.

Water Festival

The City of Brandon and the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) participated in the inaugural Brandon School Division Water Festival. The festival was held outside at Crocus Plains High School sports field where all of the Grade 4 students in the division were encouraged to participate to learn about water and its uses. There were many stations where the students spent approximately 15 minutes at each station. The festival was deemed a success due to the large effort of one of the teachers at Crocus Plains High School.

Tap Open Program

The City of Brandon is continuing to work away at reducing the number of “Tap Open” locations in the city. The “Tap Open” program deals with water services that are susceptible to freezing because they were not buried deep enough on original installation. In 2003, there were over 400 of these locations around the City. To date there are approximately 180 of these locations left in the City and the Sewer and Water Section continue to work away at reducing this number.

Depending on the amount of workload in the Sewer and Water Section, along with allocated budgets, determines the number of locations that are dealt with in a year. In a normal year there are approximately 25 – 30 locations rectified. Of the 180 that are still outstanding, approximately 50 are very difficult to deal with either because the whole main needs to be lowered or there is other infrastructure in the way which restricts lower the water service.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report of the Manager of Environmental Initiatives dated December 28, 2011 providing an update on environmental initiatives being addressed in Brandon be received.