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Feds grant cash for West Vancouver sustainability study

West Vancouver to develop community energy and emissions plan

Chris Slater / North Shore News

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A federal grant announced last week will help the District of West Vancouver look at ways to reduce greenhouse gasses for the future.

Federal Conservative MP John Weston announced a Green Municipal Fund Grant of \$82,500 for the municipality on behalf of Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, Greg Rickford, along with Brad Woodside, president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The money will go towards a study on how the District of West Vancouver can reduce greenhouse gasses in order to grow sustainably for the future, something deputy chief administrative officer for the district Brent Leigh said is somewhat late-coming.

“We’re not last but we’re late in community energy planning,” said Leigh, who explained that this could ultimately be an advantage for the district, which was comparatively early in conducting initial research into its GHG production through its Climate Action Working Group in 2010.

“Interestingly, we were kind of early in the planning that we should move on energy efficiency, but we were fairly late in doing this plan, so we benefit from some analysis of what has worked well in other communities.”

The study will look at carbon issues surrounding transportation, land use, and densification among other things, and will be conducted by a number of different collaborators, including Metro Vancouver and researchers at UBC.

As part of the process, the district will be engaging the community to help develop a Community Energy and Emissions Plan, which will contain recommendations for transportation, land use, building policies, and energy infrastructure.

Officials will be engaging with the community for input at upcoming public event Community Day in June and are hoping to present a preferred path for the plan at the Harmony Arts Festival in August.

“Climate action and sustainability are priorities of this council and community buy-in is critical, so we have set up a strong community-based working group that will develop the Community Energy and Emissions Plan,” said Michael Smith, mayor of the District of West Vancouver in Monday’s press release.

Leigh explained that input from both the public and working groups within the district is an important part of coming up with the best fitting plan for the future.

“The community engagement will be now. The plan will be only evolved through the community engagement and stakeholder engagement, but when it’s finalized in late this year is when we’re expecting the plan to be published after having the working group present (it) to council,” he said.

Once a workable plan is established, it will be taken back to council for vote in the fall and then sent to the FCM and BC Hydro for approval. By next year council will begin talks about implementation.