

Talking Points for Presentation to Environment Committee on Choosing Our Future and “An Energy & Emissions Plan for Canada’s Capital Region”

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By way of introducing myself to members of the Committee who don’t know me, you have before you a meteorologist, with extensive executive experience in developing and implementing strategic environmental plans, such as the first Canadian Climate Program in 1984. As a Director General with DND, I directed weather support for hundreds of vehicles and aircraft on military missions across Canada and on peacekeeping missions abroad. For the last 8 years, with one year off in 2009, I have chaired a working group of the city’s Environmental Advisory Committee focused on air pollution health issues and advised the City on its Management Plan for Air Quality and Climate Change in 2007, the idling control bylaw and on its air quality monitoring system. I also participated directly in early planning workshops of the Choosing Our Future project, conducted by the two cities and the NCC, for which I congratulate all three partners for engaging the public.

I’d like to make several comments about the energy and emissions plan that is part of today’s discussion. I do this as an individual, not on behalf of the Environmental Advisory Committee because it was not consulted in advance, as was the case for the previous Plan, so there was no opportunity to obtain prior approval by members for an EAC position on this framework.

A few high level comments

- a) the decision to include all three interconnected jurisdictions, Ottawa, Gatineau and the NCC, in a broad and complicated plan like this is a big challenge but worth doing, especially if we end up with specific targets and milestones to achieve the goals laid out. The plan does well in identifying targets for 2060 for buildings, energy, transportation and waste, through an assessment of Best Practices. But we do not have – and this is the difficult

part- any idea of when and where they will be implemented, other than by jurisdiction. The next step, obviously, is to see if each city and the federal government will take steps to approve short, medium and long range goals to meet the 40% reduction by 2060 and would urge that the long range target be raised to 80% to keeppace with climate science.

- b) One aspect I'd like to comment on is transportation, as most of my career has had to do with operational support and strategic planning and associated climate change plans for that sector. The plan correctly identifies transportation as large and growing quickly, so it seems logical to look at how to reduce emissions here first.
- c) Let's look at the Light Rail system to come in 2018 with an estimated cost of over \$2B. The earlier North-South LRT plan would have reduced the commuting by about 2,400 vehicles and I assume that the new LRT plan would have the same magnitude. The problem here is that the population is growing with a need for more cars and this could easily exceed the expected shift to transit. If we are going to achieve meaningful and substantial reductions in emissions, we have to look at ways of influencing the 7 out of 10 drivers who commute to work each day across our city. It is not enough to offer more accessible transit. Steps have to be taken to actively encourage the shift to transit. If that can be done in a way that also offers choices and achieves reduction in the other harmful pollutants that are emitted by vehicles, so much the better.
- d) One aspect that does not seem to be included in the documents today is the use of economic incentives or tools which can produce early and significant results, while providing a direct benefit to the user. We are familiar with Hydro Ottawa's offering discounts of 50% or more at night and over weekends. This also shifts demand away from peak hours so that less investment is needed for expanded infrastructure. In San Francisco, parking rates are changed in response to demand and at a level that guarantees that drivers can be sure of finding a space at any time and will achieve savings if they park during periods of low demand. This has the main effect of reducing the number of cars cruising for a parking space which can be as much as 40-50% of the congestion we see downtown and improved air quality. Revenue is directed back to projects that directly benefit the community.

In closing, I'd like to summarize two main points

- a) Work needs to start on action plans to implement measures that would achieve the goals in the Energy and Emissions plan. The City is encouraged to involve and use the expertise available in the public at large and on its advisory committees in these plans, as it has in the past, which has shown benefits in the quality of the plans produced
- b) In order to achieve early reductions in emissions, emerging technology and recent progress in pricing peak demand show significant results, in terms of reduced pollution and new revenue sources to pay for cleaner alternative modes of travel. The City should look at economic instruments more closely

Speaking for myself, I would be more than willing to assist the City in the development of an action plan and am sure my colleagues on EAC would too.