

City of Selkirk Declaration The Right To A Healthy Environment

Whereas the City of Selkirk understands that people are part of the environment, and that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our community;

Whereas the City of Selkirk recognizes the mutual importance and interconnectedness of a healthy environment, a strong economy and a healthy society as we move toward sustainability;

Whereas the City of Selkirk recognizes that environmental protection is a fundamental value held by its citizens;

Whereas the City of Selkirk recognizes that our world and all of its inhabitants are faced with the growing and increasingly urgent impacts of climate change, air and water pollution, and loss of biodiversity;

Whereas the City of Selkirk recognizes the importance of protecting citizens' health from environmental hazards such as air pollution, contaminated food and water, and toxic chemicals;

Whereas the City of Selkirk has a structured sphere of influence and a defined jurisdiction;

Whereas in proclaiming this declaration, Council is articulating public policy principles, but not creating or guaranteeing any legal rights or obligations;

Whereas the City of Selkirk supports the recognition of the right to a healthy environment in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

Whereas the City of Selkirk, through the Official Community Plan and its policies, reflects the values of its citizens and demonstrates a commitment to protecting the environment and moving toward a more sustainable future;

Now therefore the Council of City of Selkirk declares that:

1. All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, including the right to:
 - breathe clean air;
 - drink and access clean water;
 - eat safe and healthy food;
 - access nature;
 - know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local environment; and
 - participate in decision-making that will affect the environment.

2. Within its jurisdiction, the City of Selkirk has certain authority to respect, protect, fulfill and promote these rights and commits to encouraging the respect, protection, fulfillment and promotion of these rights.

3. The City of Selkirk shall, where practicable, apply the precautionary principle by taking measures to prevent the degradation of the environment and protect the health of its citizens where threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health or the environment exist.
4. The City of Selkirk will consider costs to human health and the environment when evaluating reasonably foreseeable costs of proposed actions and alternatives.
5. By December 31, 2017, the City of Selkirk will specify objectives, targets and timelines and actions the City of Selkirk will take, within its jurisdiction, to address the residents' right to a healthy environment under section 1, including priority actions to:
 - a. distribute environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality, preventing the cumulative health impacts of exposure to environmental contaminants;
 - b. ensure infrastructure and development projects protect the environment, including air quality;
 - c. address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures;
 - d. responsibly increase density;
 - e. prioritize walking, cycling and public transit as healthy and economical modes of transportation;
 - f. prioritize infrastructure and protected water sources for the provision of safe and accessible drinking water;
 - g. promote the availability of safe, local foods;
 - h. reduce solid waste and promote recycling, re-use and composting;
 - i. establish and maintain accessible green spaces in residential neighbourhoods, and protect and conserve nature in public open spaces;
 - j. attract and invest in green businesses, green energy, clean tech and jobs of tomorrow.

The City of Selkirk will review the objectives, targets, timelines and actions every five (5) years, and measure progress towards fulfilling this declaration; and

The City of Selkirk will consult with residents as part of this process.

6. The City of Selkirk will send letters to the provincial government and to the federal government calling for the development of provincial and federal legislation that recognizes the right to live in a healthy environment.