



Municipality of Port Hope

Staff Report

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Report Title: Port Hope's Sustainable Future - Community Climate Action Plan

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: April 1, 2025

Report Author:

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Department responsible:

Works & Engineering

Report Number: WE-04-25

Recommended Motion:

1. That Council receive Port Hope's Sustainable Future – Community Climate Action Plan; and
2. That Council direct staff to post Port Hope's Sustainable Future – Community Climate Action Plan for a 30-day review period, with the final plan to be brought back directly to Council for adoption following the public comment period.

Highlights:

- ICLEI has completed community engagement for developing the Community Climate Action Plan
- ICLEI has completed the draft Plan: Port Hope's Sustainable Future – Community Climate Action Plan
- The draft Plan will be posted for a 30-day review period with the final report to be brought back directly to Council for adoption.

Background:

Climate change refers to the long-term changes in global weather patterns that result from the build-up of heat trapping greenhouse gases (GHGs) in our atmosphere. The effects of climate change include increased extreme weather events, such as flooding, drought and high winds, as well as higher average temperatures across all seasons, that can create higher operating and maintenance costs. To combat climate change, or to take climate action, Canada, Ontario, and many municipalities including Port Hope have committed to reducing GHGs to net-zero by 2050 as part of our 2010 Corporate Climate Action Plan.

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The Municipality of Port Hope undertook a corporate and community emissions inventory in 2010. Following the inventory, a Corporate Climate Action Plan was created, along with an implementation plan. Within the two plans, specific goals were set with timelines for greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. While the Corporate Climate Action Plan requires updating in the future based on available staff and budget resources, community emissions represent over 90% of emissions within the Municipality of Port Hope, reducing these GHG emissions is essential to meeting our and Canada's goals for net-zero GHGs.

In 2022, Council provided direction to staff to undertake a community climate action plan, following which, in 2023, the Municipality retained ICLEI Canada to prepare the Plan. Throughout 2024, ICLEI, along with the support of municipal staff and the Environmental Advisory Committee, undertook community engagement through information sessions, and focus group meetings and interviews. ICLEI incorporated the commentary it received and has drafted a Port Hope specific Plan, entitled Port Hope's Sustainable Future - Community Climate Action Plan (see Attachment 1). This plan is mitigation focused. Mitigation aims to reduce the causes of climate change versus adaptation which aim to lessen the impacts experienced from climate change.

Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Partners for Climate Protection, specific milestones with different criteria have been established to guide Municipalities in addressing climate change via GHG reductions. These milestones apply on a Corporate level, as well as a Community level. To date, the Municipality has met Corporate Milestones 1 (create a baseline emissions inventory), 2 (set emissions reductions targets), and 3 (develop a local climate action plan). The Municipality is also working through Corporate Milestones 4 (implement a local climate action plan) and 5 (monitor and report results).

The Municipality has achieved Community Milestone 1 (create a baseline emissions inventory). The creation of this Community Climate Action Plan will achieve Community Milestones 1-3.

Discussion:

The aim of this plan was to create a community focused document that identified how residents and businesses in Port Hope could undertake climate action, and how the Municipality could support their needs. The proposed governance model for implementing the Plan is a 'Community-led and municipally supported model'. This model seeks to enable community members in Port Hope to take action on climate change with the support and guidance of the Municipality. Through community engagement, ICLEI was able to collaboratively create the vision statement for the plan:

"Port Hope envisions a healthy and thriving future, where we take care of our trees, gardens and green spaces, protect our farmland and local food systems, and ensure that our community remains safe, affordable and accessible for everyone. Our future is one where we produce less waste, support local businesses, embrace more active ways of getting around, and cherish our connection to nature."

This vision statement identifies the main concepts that were heard through the community input and feeds into the actions and strategies within the plan.

The main step in meeting this vision is to set goals, including interim goals. Port Hope's GHG interim target is to have a 46% reduction in community GHG emissions by 2035 relative to 2018 levels; and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The draft Plan identifies 17 strategies that the community, with the support of the Municipality, can take to reduce its carbon footprint. These actions span several different sectors including buildings and facilities, transportation, community design and land-use planning, agriculture and local food systems, environmental stewardship, and waste and water.

In addition to reducing the causes of climate change, many of these actions have the added benefit of costs savings, as well as improved health and wellbeing from a greener and more diverse environment with active transportation options. Each strategy comes with examples of how each sector of the community can implement changes, including some funding opportunities, to meet Port Hope's vision of a healthy and thriving future.

As this plan is community driven, we want to have this plan open for comment by all members of the community prior to its adoption. The goal of this plan was to identify strategies that the Port Hope community is willing and able to implement and to support those initiatives to further community climate action goals. This review will provide the community the opportunity to ensure that the actions accurately reflect the strategies that they identified.

Financial Considerations:

There are no noted financial implications with this report. The Plan has been funded as part of the approved operating budget and is within budget. Any future initiatives would be brought forward to Council for budget consideration.

Communication and Public Engagement:

This draft Plan was created through community input via surveys, an open house, focus groups, and interviews. The draft Plan will be posted to the Port Hope engagement website for a 30-day comment period and the amended report brought back directly to Council for adoption following the public comment period.

Once the final plan is adopted by Council, it will be published on the Municipality's website for public access. Staff will collaborate with the Communications division to announce its adoption and highlight the key outcomes of the plan through a media release, social media updates, and other municipal communication channels as needed. Additionally, efforts will be made to inform the community partners engaged in the consultation process to ensure broad awareness and engagement with the final plan.

Conclusion:

The draft Plan will lay the groundwork for greater emphasis on decarbonization, sustainable solutions, and providing strategies to help the community advance its climate action goals. The Plan incorporates significant community input in its development, highlighting the priorities and actions supported by the community. It is recommended that the Plan be posted for community review, and, after any necessary revisions, be presented to the Council for adoption.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Draft Port Hope's Sustainable Future - Community Climate Action Plan

Attachment 2 – ICLEI presentation of Draft Port Hope's Sustainable Future - Community Climate Action Plan