



**Municipality of Port Hope**

56 Queen Street  
Port Hope, ON  
L1A 3Z9

**REPORT TO:** Community Development Committee

**FROM:** Kevin Narraway, Manager, Marketing & Tourism

**SUBJECT:** Community Climate Change Survey Outcomes

**DATE:** December 7, 2021

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That a resolution be presented to Council to receive the results of the Community Climate Change Survey, and further;

That staff be directed to create an action plan on how recommendations are to be prioritized and considered for implementation.

**BACKGROUND:**

In September 2019 Council approved a resolution from the Centre of Excellence for Environmental Sustainability Working Group for a Climate Action Plan project in collaboration with McMaster University. This resolution directed staff to proceed with a multi-step plan and schedule.

This resolution followed a June 2019 Federal Government Declaration of Climate Emergency. Since that statement several neighbouring municipalities have made similar declarations. However, without a concise plan, declarations such as this leave staff with the difficult work of determining which mitigation and/or adaptation efforts should be undertaken and how best to measure these efforts.

Council's desired outcome was to understand how residents viewed climate change and what mitigation and/or adaptation efforts were deemed most important, specific to the Port Hope community.

**The multi-step project was to:**

- Provide a local perspective on the realities of climate change and what this means to this community;

- Gather resident input and perspectives on concerns regarding climate change as well as providing solutions which can be undertaken in their own backyards;
- Implement a made-in-Port Hope Climate Action Plan that builds on the 2010 Corporate Climate Action Plan with real deliverables and department-by-department objectives that can be monitored, measured, and anticipated by residents, Council, and staff; and,
- Provide a proactive and responsible approach to climate change versus a broad declaration of climate emergency undertaken by other communities.

Some of the initially proposed timelines, outlined in the multi-step plan were delayed or augmented due to the COVID pandemic and staff have worked with McMaster to recalibrate the project to provide the information Council was seeking.

To summarize the current status, the original projects four steps were modified and detailed below:

Step One: A meeting and open house occurred in October 2019, chaired by a panel of internationally and locally recognized experts in global warming. The event was attended by approximately 30 residents.

The panel spoke to an audience of residents, Council, Municipal staff, and County staff about: the realities of climate change, both anticipated short-term and long-term consequences; what these changes will look like to individual residents; and what these changes might look like in our own backyards. The discussions outlined realities likely to be faced by homeowners including shoreline issues, river valley issues, impacts to agricultural lands, basement flooding and more.

Step Two: Due to COVID the McMaster students were unable to host a community workshop scheduled for Spring 2020. Originally this workshop was designed to create additional awareness of climate change, and to promote steps and tools residents could undertake to mitigate climate change.

Instead of a community workshop the Centre of Excellence Working Group and McMaster opted to orchestrate and promote a community survey. Word of mouth, social media, online advertising, and radio promoted participation of the survey to residents.

As a result the Community Climate Change Survey was developed and completed by McMaster, and was received by the Climate Change Working group.

Step Three: With the results of step two guiding implementation, Step three was anticipated to entail further work with McMaster faculty and students to propose future-looking concepts to adapt to and mitigate for the effects of climate change. Step three was similarly augmented due to the realities of the pandemic. McMaster students included a list of high-level recommendations in the Community Climate Change Survey report (Attachment 1) which were gleaned from the combined outcomes of the step one open house and the community survey.

Step Four: McMaster University was to prepare a summary report detailing design and policy options, but this too was deferred due to the pandemic.

Staff have recently met with McMaster and they are interested in continuing work with the Municipality as required to detail priorities identified by staff.

This completes the work on this survey and community outreach stage along with this project stage with McMaster. Similarly, the work of the Climate Change Working Group was completed, and that working group was wrapped up.

**Survey outcome highlights (Attachment 1):**

- 199 completed surveys This survey was conducted under the watchful participation of a fully tenured professor at McMaster University and the methodology was approved by McMaster's ethics board and deemed to be sound. Results include – 95% confidence level and 7% margin of error;
- Residents believe acknowledging and prioritizing matters pertaining to climate change and increased support for the vulnerable populations should take precedence over local economic development, job creation, quality of life improvements, First Nations reconciliations, Municipal upgrades, and tax increases;
- Community unanimously perceives climate change as a risk;
- Most residents are not aware of any current Municipal strategies for combating climate change;
- A vast majority of resident respondents consider climate change to be caused by human activities such as deforestation and the use of fossil fuels;
- Residents identified Municipal government support for the agricultural community as well as affordable housing as top priorities;
- Eighty percent of respondents advocate for adaptative plans that involve tree planting expanding the local tree canopy and saving the Ganaraska Watershed wetlands.

**High level recommendations from survey outcomes are:**

- To consider climate change as a lens for all future Municipal planning;
- Investigate on-demand transportation services and cycling;
- Assess and invest in electric vehicle infrastructure;
- Create a transport management association to help develop a low-carbon transportation plan for local businesses, schools/colleges, and Municipal staff;
- Create and maintain a complete record of existing green space - set a yearly target for new tree plantings in public and private spaces;
- Invest in agroforestry, creating and maintain tree planting incentives on and around agricultural land to help protect farmers from the impacts of the changing climate;
- Promote green energy incentives for agricultural communities;
- Install photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on Municipal buildings, with plans for an annual capacity increase;
- Incentivize local businesses to pursue higher green standards despite the marginally higher costs for local consumers.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff will develop an action plan prioritizing the recommendations in the report, define budget implications, departmental responsibilities and provide projected timelines for implementation.

**CONCLUSION:**

Although this concludes the work of McMaster in reaching out to the Port Hope community to collect concerns related to climate change, Municipal staff can call upon the resources of the university to further explore prioritized recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Narraway, Manager, Marketing & Tourism