



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Division: Environment
Report Number: 2021-117-Infrastructure and Municipal Works
Prepared By: Angela Parker, Sustainability Project Coordinator
Meeting Date: December 13, 2021
Subject: Climate Emergency Declaration

Purpose

To declare a climate emergency, joining more than 500 Canadian municipalities who have already publicly recognized the global climate crisis.

Recommendation

- a. That Council receive Report #2021-117-IMW;
- b. That Council adopt the Climate Emergency Declaration;
- c. That the City of Cornwall, in consultation with the Environment and Climate Change Committee (ECCC), adopt the national greenhouse gas reduction (GHG) target, which is 40-45 percent below 2005 levels by 2030;
- d. That the City of Cornwall join the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) by passing the additional Council Resolution and committing to its 5-step framework;
- e. That Administration proceed to develop a Community Climate Action Plan that can realistically achieve the City's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and which includes adaptation plans for the expected impacts of climate change, subject to funding;
- f. That Administration further research the concept of implementing a Climate Lens for all City projects and Council decisions, as previously described in report #2021-07-IMW and propose a plan and timeline for implementing a version of one for the City.



- g. That Administration be directed to create a report, with the assistance of the Environment and Climate Change Committee, outlining a process to assess climate adaptation within the community and to determine if joining International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives' (ICLEI) Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC) is beneficial.

Financial Implications

There are no direct costs for declaring a climate emergency, joining PCP, or adopting a green house gas (GHG) reduction target; however, developing a Community Climate Action Plan is estimated to cost \$100,000 for a municipality of Cornwall's size. It is proposed to commission an environment and energy consultant with expertise in this field to prepare a Community Climate Action Plan for the City of Cornwall. There is funding for this type of project through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund. FCM provides a grant for up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$175,000 for a plan with a sustainable development vision with environmental, social and economic objectives. Matching funds from the municipality have been allocated for a Community Climate Action Plan in the proposed 2022 municipal budget.

Furthermore, the City is a member of the Clean Air Partnership and through this organization the City can obtain an updated corporate GHG inventory at no cost.

As part of future planning, the City will choose to implement initiatives that will cost the City to meet the challenges presented by climate change however, it will be considered as a choice of spending up-front to save money in the long run. Ensuring that infrastructure is resilient to extreme weather events will help reduce direct losses and reduce the indirect costs of disruption (for example, as a result of flooding).

Lowering GHG emissions will lead to better health in the community. Moving to cleaner and more sustainable choices for energy supply and transport effectively pays for itself. In December 2018 in a World Health Organization (WHO) news release, Dr Maria Neira, WHO Director of Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of Health said: "When health is taken into account, climate change mitigation is an opportunity, not a cost."

Strategic Priority Implications

The resolution to declare a Climate Emergency directly relates to Pillar 5 of the Strategic Plan: *“Being Leaders in Sustainability and Climate Change Impact.”* However, it also ultimately relates to all five pillars. For example, the strategic priority entitled *“Growing quality housing stock, including affordable housing”*, intersects with climate action. Poorly maintained buildings can not only contribute to GHG emissions through excessive energy loss, they can also impose higher energy costs and reduced comfort, and possibly require higher monthly investments by tenants to maintain comfort (i.e. investing in augmented heat such as small electric space heaters).

Background / Discussion

Declaring a climate emergency would publicly recognize the global climate crisis and signal Cornwall’s commitment to reducing its GHG emissions and to becoming a city resilient to climate change. The statement itself is not going to change anything immediately, but it does showcase a priority.

When the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Sixth Assessment Report earlier this year, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres dubbed it “code red for humanity.” The climate is changing, and it is because of human activity. Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900; averaged over the next 20 years, global temperature is expected to reach or exceed 1.5°C of warming (see attached IPCC Press Release entitled *Climate change widespread, rapid, and intensifying – IPCC.*) Many of climate change’s effects are irreversible, and many predicted future impacts are now inevitable. In every region of the world, extreme weather events such as heat waves, heavy precipitation, tornadoes and droughts are becoming more intense and more frequent. Scientists have known for over two centuries that carbon dioxide (CO₂) from burning fossil fuels could raise the global temperature (aka “the greenhouse effect” – see attached article *“They found hidden patterns in the climate and in other complex phenomena”*).

Stabilizing the climate will require strong, rapid, and sustained reductions in GHG emissions. Limiting other greenhouse gases and air pollutants, especially methane, could have benefits both for health and the climate.

The City's Role

This year, on July 12 Council proclaimed Saturday, August 7, 2021, as “Eco Day” in the City of Cornwall; and on September 27 Council proclaimed Wednesday, October 6, 2021, as “Energy Efficiency Day” in the City of Cornwall. (These resolutions are attached for review. See *2021-17-CAO* and *2021-71-IMW*). By acknowledging both, Council carried on the conversation for climate change, and continued to motivate the City to make both small and large decisions while considering GHG emissions and local extreme weather resiliency.

By declaring a climate emergency, the City is acknowledging global scientific consensus on severity of issue and urgent need for action, and recognizing that climate change is, and will continue, to exacerbate other major crises. The Corporation would also be validating public concern and desire for leadership and recognizing the City's own contribution to the climate crisis and what is required to take immediate steps to reduce our environmental footprint.

Council declaring a climate emergency would result in:

- Focusing the City of Cornwall on the urgent need to transform local energy systems and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in its own operations and throughout the community and region.
- Driving municipal decision making and processes that will help protect our community and align investments to the climate conditions that the City is likely to face. (Day-to-day operations continue but with intent to work with a “climate lens”).
- Alerting the community to the dangers posed by climate change.
- Raising the City of Cornwall's ambition to fight climate change.
- The City of Cornwall joining 500+ communities in Canada as well as around the world that have also declared climate emergencies, including the following Ontario municipalities:
 - ✓ Belleville – declared June 28, 2021
 - ✓ Pembroke – declared April 21, 2021
 - ✓ Gananoque - declared July 2, 2019
 - ✓ Ottawa – declared April 24, 2019
 - ✓ Kingston – declared March 5, 2019



Action Items

1) Partners for Climate Protection

Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) is a national network of over 400 municipalities with the shared goal of taking action against climate change and reducing local greenhouse gas emissions. PCP is managed and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Local Governments for Sustainability Canada (ICLEI Canada) and receives financial support from the Government of Canada and ICLEI Canada.

By joining PCP, Cornwall would be joining more than 400 other municipalities across Canada taking steps forward to take action against climate change by reducing emissions. There is no cost for joining the PCP. All that is required is for Council to pass the compulsory PCP Council Resolution. A sample resolution is attached. With membership, the City would have access to expert technical advice, funding, and training for employees.

The City is already a member of the Clean Air Partnership, which has access to similar resources; however, the Deputy Director of the organization also encourages municipalities to join PCP for its 5-step milestone framework and access to more resources.

PCP's 5-step milestone framework	How this currently refers to the City
1. Create a baseline emissions inventory and forecast at the corporate and community levels.	This would be included in the City's proposed Climate Action Plan.
2. Set emissions reductions target.	<p>In report #2021-07-IMW from February 22, 2021, it was proposed that the City set the target of "zero carbon as soon as possible."</p> <p>It is recommended that the City set an absolute target instead of a target that suggests it can be completed at one's earliest convenience or implies that something is urgent, but</p>

	<p>can wait until a specific deadline if necessary.</p> <p>Targets should be clearly defined and should include a baseline year and a target year.</p> <p>Setting aggressive GHG reduction targets can help garner senior management attention and increase funding for internal GHG reduction projects. It can also encourage innovation and help in the recruitment and retention of qualified employees.</p> <p>Additionally, declaring GHG reduction targets publicly is best practice. Publicly reported GHG targets provide transparency, accountability, and credibility to the target setting process.</p>
3. Develop a Local Action Plan.	Funding allocated in the proposed 2022 budget.
4. Implement the Local Action Plan.	
5. Monitor progress and reporting results.	

As an example, Kingston, Ontario joined PCP in 2004 and completed community and corporate carbon or GHG emission inventories for 2000, 2006 to 2011, 2014 and 2015 which accomplished milestones 1 and 2. For milestone 3, in 2014, Kingston’s City Council received the Kingston Climate Action Plan and adopted updated carbon emission reduction goals. In 2017, Kingston completed milestones 4 and 5, becoming one of twenty-three Canadian municipalities to have completed the 5-milestone program since 2013. (See attached document). On March 5, 2019, the City of Kingston became the first Ontario municipality to declare that climate change is an emergency that requires an urgent and strategic response.



2) Community Climate Action Plan

A Community Climate Action Plan would build upon the 2021 cost analysis report for Cornwall's Greenhouse Gas emissions (see attached report *2021-07-IMW*) to further establish a vision as well as priority actions to support sustainable development at the municipal and neighbourhood levels. This plan would serve to help Cornwall reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve its soil, water and air quality, and become resilient to extreme weather events. Furthermore, having a Community Climate Action Plan leverages partnerships and sources of funding, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund. Administration would proceed to issue an RFP for the development of a Climate Action Plan, then apply to FCM funding.

The City currently has numerous resources that are typically found in municipal climate action plans, including: environmental services staff engagement; corporate energy inventory; corporate GHG inventory (2018 & 2019); community engagement (See attached ECCC letters of support and 2021 climate survey results); and internal engagement (Internal Working Group for Energy & Climate Change with staff representatives from almost all departments and divisions). Being able to organize all of the resources into one document (a public, council-approved Community Climate Action Plan) would be preferential.

3) Climate Lens

Administration will further research the concept of implementing a Climate Lens for all City projects and Council decisions as previously described in report *2021-07-IMW*. Many funding opportunities, including grants from Infrastructure Canada, require projects to be viewed through a climate lens; thus, requiring an understanding of the project's climate change risks, resilience strategies, and GHG emissions.

Clean Air Partnership (CAP) is a charitable environmental organization launched in June, 2000. They empower communities to improve air quality, advance active transportation, and take bold climate action. They also convene networks, lead research and knowledge transfer, and catalyze transformative action. Cornwall is currently a municipal member of CAP. CAP offers a free web-based Municipal Climate Lens Tool (The Tool) on their website that provides a preliminary, qualitative understanding of whether a municipal decision will affect climate or be affected by climate. (See attached example). Results are provided immediately on-screen and then by email. The Tool provides a mechanism to analyze the relationship between a municipal decision and climate change. It does not provide a detailed quantitative evaluation of a decision. Instead, it provides high-level probabilities designed to foster multi-departmental dialogue regarding how



to incorporate climate change considerations into decision making. It is expected that municipalities will decide the scope of decisions the Tool should be applied to and how to enforce the use of the Tool.

The Tool is designed to be used by all staff in a municipality and is designed to be broadly applicable to any decision. For staff unfamiliar with climate change concepts, they can consult with the City's Sustainability Project Coordinator or CAP staff. There are no direct costs in developing and implementing a Climate Lens, other than staff time.

CAP's climate lens takes GHG emissions, temperatures (heat) and rainfall into consideration, balancing climate change impacts with economic development; however, it does not consider biodiversity loss. Ecosystem distresses driven by climate change have direct human impacts, including reduced water supply and quality, the loss of species and landscapes, distorted rhythms of nature, and the potential for extreme events to upset the regulating services of ecosystems. Natural habitats play an important role in regulating climate and can help to absorb and store carbon.

On November 23, 2021, the federal government announced in its Speech from the Throne, that it would take a whole-of-government approach to conserving nature, including putting in place a "biodiversity lens" as part of the government-wide climate lens currently under development. This would help ensure all federal departments take impacts on nature and climate into account in decision-making. It is anticipated that in the future, a biodiversity lens would eventually be integrated within the climate lens exercise.

4) Create a report outlining methods to strengthen the City's action on climate change

Methods to strengthen the City's action on climate change are currently being researched with the City's newly established Internal Working Group for Energy & Climate Change.

The Corporation is already looking into net-zero carbon and net-zero energy for retrofits and for new municipal buildings. Electric vehicle (EV) chargers for the city are being considered. In 2022 Administration will conduct an investigation regarding costs and funding opportunities associated with installing up to 36 pay-as-you-go EV chargers at strategic locations throughout the municipality which can be utilized by the general public, municipal employees and/or current and future municipal vehicles. Electrifying fleet and Transit are being considered for the near future.



The City is in the midst of a major environmental conservation initiative by moving forward with the universal installation of water meters.

Methods that other municipalities have implemented and could be considered include: more walkable communities; containing urban sprawl; green infrastructure; incentive programs for the private sector to eliminate fossil fuels as a heating source for its buildings; green building standards as well as low impact development and policy. Conversations are being had with other Canadian municipalities to compare and contrast methods.

There are grants available for pilot projects for which the City could apply and if approved, utilize the funding to test innovative methods to strengthen the City's action on climate change.

Climate adaptation and mitigation training and education opportunities are currently being utilized and are being considered for 2022.

The Environment and Climate Change Committee have also requested that Administration investigate if joining International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives' (ICLEI) Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC) is beneficial to the municipality. ICLEI provides a wide-range of services for local, provincial and federal governments in support of developing sustainable, climate-ready communities, including adaptation and resilience planning. One of ICLEI's programs is BARC and its mandate is to offer "a comprehensive way to respond to the impacts of climate change and protect the people, places, and prosperity of your community."

Climate change continues to impact almost all aspects of everyday life including but not limited to, human health; agriculture and food security; water supply; transportation; energy; and ecosystems. Administration will continue to absorb new information, explore different resources and then promote the implementation of climate change mitigation strategies and initiatives in a timely manner.

Document Title:	Climate Emergency Declaration - 2021-117-Infrastructure and Municipal Works.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost Analysis Cornwall Greenhouse Gas Emissions - 2021-07-IMW.pdf - 2021-17-CAO.pdf - 2021-71-IMW.pdf - IPCC_WGI-AR6-Press-Release_en.pdf - popular-physicsprize2021.pdf - TEMPLATE-council-resolution-to-join-pcp.pdf - Climate Lens Tool example.pdf - 21. 2022 Community Climate Action Plan.pdf - EOHU statement for climate emergency.pdf - Praisly Hunter statement for climate emergency declaration.pdf - What we heard - climate change survey (002) with graphs.pdf
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Bill de Wit - Dec 7, 2021 - 5:44 PM

Maureen Adams - Dec 7, 2021 - 7:36 PM