

To:	Chair Carleton and Members of the Climate Change Task Force
Committee Date:	December 14, 2021
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CCTF-03-22
Title:	What We Heard - Draft Climate Change Action Plan Engagement Findings
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Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All municipalities within Grey
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report PDR-CCTF-03-22 regarding ‘What We Heard - Draft Climate Change Action Plan Engagement Findings’ be received; and
2. That staff be directed to incorporate these engagement findings into a final draft of the Climate Change Action Plan, to be considered by the Climate Change Task Force and County Council.

Executive Summary

Grey County, with the support of ICLEI Canada, has worked since 2019 with member municipalities, stakeholders, and community members to draft a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The Draft CCAP is informed by technical analysis of how effective different actions will be in fighting climate change, input from local residents and stakeholders about their priorities in Grey County and how to best maximize local social, economic and health benefits. Public and stakeholder engagement has occurred throughout the CCAP development process. Phase 1 occurred in 2020 and informed the Draft CCAP presented to the Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF) in July 2021. Phase 2 occurred July to November 2021 seeking feedback on the Draft CCAP and is summarized in the attached “What We Heard” report. County staff are ready to work with ICLEI to incorporate this feedback into a final draft of the CCAP in continued consultation about implementation with municipalities and partner organizations.

Background

Since 2019 the County of Grey has been working with ICLEI Canada to develop a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) that will help the County and its partners reduce local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A draft of the CCAP was prepared using the Federation of Canadian

Municipalities (FCM) Partners for Climate Protection five-milestone framework. The PCP framework focuses on quantifying and analyzing local GHG emissions and identifying actions to reduce them. As such it is a mitigation plan, and the CCAP identifies the need to also develop an adaptation plan to help the County, member municipalities, and our community respond to our changing climate as one of the next steps.

The draft CCAP provides 25 strategies in 7 categories for GHG emission reductions to achieve the community targets, and 14 strategies in 4 categories to achieve the corporate targets. Implementation of the CCAP will require partnerships with member municipalities, the public, utility companies, and different sectors of the economy (i.e. businesses, agriculture, tourism, etc.). Since July 2021 County staff have solicited and received feedback on the draft CCAP.

In addition to the public and stakeholder feedback solicited on the plan, County staff have also established a Climate Change Community of Practice, and each member municipality has identified a climate lead to participate and share information to co-ordinate action and avoid duplication.

There is also the Internal Climate Change Working group comprised of County staff across departments that have provided feedback on the draft CCAP and will support implementation.

The public and stakeholder engagement process included several elements:

- The draft CCAP was posted to the County's website (grey.ca/climateaction) in July, with an invitation to email County Staff with comments, questions or concerns. Eleven individuals submitted comments by email.
- In October the County hosted two public engagement sessions attended by 25 participants.
- Seven organizations provided comments on the draft CCAP, and four formal Committees requested presentations and provided feedback through discussion.
- The engagement process was broadly guided by three questions asked to residents and stakeholders:
 1. Does the draft Climate Change Action Plan reflect your priorities? What should we do first?
 2. What's your reaction to the draft greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets?
 3. How do you want to be engaged in implementing the County Climate Action Plan? How can we implement these strategies to deliver the most community benefit (e.g. create jobs, advance reconciliation, improve public health etc.)?

The first question asked in the public and stakeholder engagement process was if the draft CCAP reflected the respondents' priorities, and what they felt should be done first. General advice along with sector specific feedback was captured. An overriding theme was that there needed to be clearer prioritization throughout the plan and that the County should look to prioritize activities based on where we have the greatest leverage and control, activities that were most cost effective, and where there is the potential for the greatest GHG reductions. In addition, feedback was given that the plan should be treated as a "living document" and updated regularly in collaboration with community stakeholders and member municipalities. There was a strong desire for the County to adopt a leadership role and support and coordinate with member municipalities. Greater attention to nature-based solutions, and the potential of carbon sequestrations in Grey County's landscape were frequently mentioned, along with leveraging existing local sustainable agriculture efforts and County forests.

The draft CCAP proposed a vision for the County to reduce corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions against a 2018 baseline by 20% by the year 2030 and 60% by the year 2050. Community GHG emission reduction targets were proposed at 15% by the year 2030 and 50% by the year 2050 against a 2018 baseline. Since these targets were developed the Government of Canada has passed the Canadian Net-Zero Accountability Act (S.C. 2021, c. 22), that legislates a net-zero emissions target by 2050 for Canada, and the federal government has also committed to reducing emissions by 40-45% by 2030 from a 2005 baseline. The second question asked during Phase 2 engagement were for reactions to the draft CCAP targets. All feedback received that referenced the CCAP draft targets' level of ambition suggested stronger targets, and often referenced the need to align with the new Federal net-zero targets.

The third question asked in the Phase 2 engagement was for advice on how to implement the CCAP and maximize local community benefits. There was significant feedback that partnership and engagement will be essential to the Plan's success. The County needs to work with member municipalities, the agricultural sector, clean energy firms, and most importantly residents to advance climate action. There was support for an Implementation Working Group to bring together local expertise and champions and monitor the progress being made. Comments were also received about the essential role of Indigenous leadership in climate action and the need to centre reconciliation in the CCAP's implementation.

Overall there is strong support from residents and stakeholders for the County's development of the CCAP. Across Phase 2 engagement activities the following recommendations emerged:

1. Set more ambitious targets, align with federal net-zero by 2050 target, and set "science-based" goals.
2. Pay more attention to nature-based solutions, (including afforestation and agricultural land sequestration potential); leverage the advantages of Grey County's landscape.
3. Create a clear prioritization of actions and identify initial specific implementation actions.
4. Treat plan as a "living document," recognizing the dynamic nature of climate science and update regularly.
5. Continue to improve data collection, analysis and communication, particularly in the agricultural sector.
6. Show leadership at the county level in climate action, and support collaboration and coordination with member municipalities
7. Centre reconciliation in climate action, given the long history of Indigenous leadership in environmental stewardship, and Grey County's location on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples.
8. Recognize that agriculture is a critical element of Grey County culture and economy, and support and enhance the agri-food sector's existing efforts to address climate change.
9. Leverage emerging energy innovation sector, particularly related to hydrogen, in Grey and Bruce Counties, and champion local low-carbon energy leadership.
10. Consider lifecycle emissions of building materials, technologies etc. where possible, not just local operational emissions.
11. Ramp up engagement, education and communication, as essential opportunities to build awareness and involvement in climate issues with residents and businesses, as response needs to be both technological and cultural.

Staff are ready to work with ICLEI to prepare a final draft of the CCAP reflecting the public engagement findings for consideration by the Climate Change Task Force and County Council.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

While the County is not legislatively required to have a Climate Change Action Plan, the County is required by section 16(14) of the *Planning Act* to include in its official plan policies that identify goals, objectives and actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to provide for adaptation to a changing climate, including through increasing resiliency.

The County is also required by section 3 of the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015* when making decisions regarding infrastructure to consider that infrastructure should be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change. Regulation 588/17 made under that Act also require that the County's strategic asset management policy contain a commitment to consider actions addressing vulnerabilities that climate change may cause for infrastructure and costs and adaptation plans related to them, as well as mitigation approaches to climate change in general.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications of receiving this public engagement findings report. Implementation of the CCAP would be required to be included in future County budgets.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: All County Departments
- External: The public, member municipalities, conservation authorities, interested stakeholders.

Appendices and Attachments

Attachment A: ['What We Heard' - Draft Climate Change Action Plan Engagement Findings](#)

Appendix 1: [CCAP Stakeholder Comments](#)

Appendix 2: [CCAP Public Comments](#)

Appendix 3: [CCAP Public Engagement Evaluation Survey](#)

Appendix 4: [CCAP Public Engagement Session MURAL board](#)