

## Attachment A

# “What We Heard” – Climate Change Action Plan Engagement Findings

## Executive Summary

Between July 5<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 County staff have received feedback on the Draft Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). Feedback has been received through two virtual public engagement sessions, written submissions from individuals and stakeholder organizations, and through formal presentations and discussions with interested committees.

Across these 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.

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## Introduction

Grey County, with the support of ICLEI Canada, has worked since 2019 with municipalities, stakeholders, and community members to draft a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). The Draft CCAP builds on 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 County’s Climate Change Taskforce in July 2021. Phase 2 occurred July to November 2021 seeking feedback on the Draft CCAP and is summarized in this report.

ICLEI Canada is a recognized expert in climate action planning and supported the design of the engagement processes and activities centering principles of clarity, inclusivity, and accessibility.

This “What We Heard” summary document describes the various engagement approaches used, and the key ideas and recommendations that emerged through the engagements. We have captured both ideas we heard often, and also ideas we only heard once to show both areas of agreement and disagreement. Climate action is a complex, necessary endeavor, and its success depends on responding to all community ideas and concerns.

## Engagement Summary

There have been two phases of engagement during the CCAP development process: Phase 1 engagements informed the development of the draft CCAP, and Phase 2 engagements asked for feedback on that draft. All engagement has occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore our engagement approaches were modified to virtual channels to reflect public health advice.

## Phase 1 Engagement (February 2020 – March 2021)

Throughout 2020 engagement occurred with the Climate Change Taskforce, the Climate Change Internal Working Group, and the Climate Change External Working Group, groups comprised as described below:

- Climate Change Task Force
  - County Council and Senior Management Staff
  - Provides strategic direction and guidance to the Plan
- Climate Change Internal Working Group
  - Staff from various departments at the County
  - Provides strategic input from a corporate perspective, and help inform the process, recommendations and the overall Plan
- Climate Change External Working Group
  - Members from local health units, conservation authorities, organizations, academics, etc.
  - Provides local expertise, suggestions and recommendations, help inform process and Plan

A summary of the Climate Change Task Force's initial feedback is available here:

<https://council.grey.ca/meeting/getPDFRendition?documentObjectId=c598ce04-7a0a-4e72-9af1-e5bb608f458e>

Phase 1 Engagement also included:

- **Two online surveys** (one for the general public and one for the agricultural community & organizations) administered to collect feedback on actions;
  - **General Survey (June 15 – July 10, 2020)**
    - 232 respondents from the community
    - Combination of “1-5” scale questions and open-ended questions covering all themes in Plan
    - General Climate Change Survey Results (August 2020): [Grey Climate Change Action Plan General Survey Results and Insights](#)
  - **Agriculture Survey (August 2020)**
    - 38 respondents
    - Questions focused on
      - Climate Change and Sustainable Agriculture Awareness

- General Farm Information
- On-Farm Sustainability and Resiliency Practices
- Program Participation
  - Challenges and Solutions
  - Agricultural Sectors Climate Change Survey Results (September 2020): [Agricultural Survey Results and Insights.pdf](#)
- **Online updates** on the Plan process and outcomes at every phase;
- **Online “mini-workshops”** held with various community organizations to collect feedback on overall goals and actions; and
- **Targeted virtual meetings** with member municipalities, community groups/organizations and key economic sectors (i.e. agriculture, tourism, small business, seniors, etc.).

These results were presented to the CCTF and informed the Draft Climate Change Action plan presented to the CCTF July 5, 2021 and approved for further public consultation :

<https://council.grey.ca/meeting/getPDFRendition?documentObjectId=9aaffddd-b8ae-4d6b-9c15-632c15f8c268>

## Phase 2 Engagement (July 2021 – November 2021)

Having engaged hundreds of Grey County residents and stakeholders in drafting the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) we wanted to understand where we got the CCAP right and where there were still untapped opportunities.

The draft CCAP was posted to the County website in July 2021 after being endorsed by the Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF) for further public engagement. Everyone was invited to contact County staff with any comments or questions about the plan either by email or phone.

In September 2021 the County announced it would be hosting online public engagement sessions in October and was also interested in attending any community meetings to present the draft CCAP and receive feedback.

Three guiding questions were posted to the County CCAP webpage and the community was invited to consider them in their responses. These same three questions guided the public engagement sessions and stakeholder discussions:

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.)?

Comments were received from seven organizations, and when consented are attached in Appendix 1. Eleven residents submitted comments, and when consented they are attached in Appendix 2. Twenty-five participants joined the County-hosted online engagement sessions, and four formal Committees requested presentations and provided feedback through discussion.

## Public Engagement Sessions

In September 2021 the County announced it would be hosting online public engagement sessions in October and was also interested in attending any community meetings to present the draft CCAP and receive feedback. These sessions were announced in a media release, County Council was notified, and the sessions were promoted on social media. Residents were encouraged to get in touch with County staff if they required any accommodation to participate. No requests for accommodation were received.

County staff held two open virtual public engagement sessions on October 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:00PM – 8:30PM and on October 27<sup>th</sup> from 1:00PM – 2:30PM. Initially, a third session was scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> from 5:00PM – 6:30PM but due to low registration participants were encouraged to attend one of the other two sessions or contact County staff directly. In total 25 people participated in the two sessions. The sessions agendas were as follows:

1. Land acknowledgement
2. Welcome from Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Kim Wingrove or Deputy CAO Randy Scherzer
3. Overview presentation on CCAP from the County Manager of Climate Change Initiatives
4. General questions about the CCAP
5. Breakout group conversations facilitated by County staff around three questions, with plenary report backs:
  - a. Does the draft Climate Change Action Plan reflect your priorities? What should we do first?
  - b. What's your reaction to the draft GHG reduction targets?

- c. 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.)?

Participants that registered were sent a document summarizing the CCAP and the guiding questions in advance.

After the engagement sessions a short feedback survey including optional demographic questions was sent to all registered participants. Fifteen responses were received from the feedback survey and a full summary is provided in Appendix 3.

The feedback survey responses showed that:

- All respondents agreed the public engagement sessions were a “good use” of their time and over half strongly agreed.
- All but one respondent agreed they understood the materials presented and felt their ideas were heard in the facilitated breakout groups.
- 14% of respondents did not feel their questions about the CCAP were answered at the engagement sessions.

From the demographic data provided we know:

- 40% of respondents are aged 66-75 years old, no one under the age of 26 responded.
- 53% of respondents are women, 33% men and 13% preferred not to answer.
- All respondents have at least some college, while 80% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher.
- 77% of respondents identify as white.
- 80% of respondents are homeowners.

The sessions occurred on Zoom and used the online platform MURAL as a virtual whiteboard where participants and facilitators could make notes on ideas raised during the breakout group discussions. A download of the MURAL board is included in Appendix 4.

All notes from the MURAL were transferred to an excel sheet and analyzed. The summary below includes examples of the kinds of comments made by participants in each theme, not all comments have been included to avoid repetition.

# Responses to Question 1: Does the draft Climate Change Action Plan reflect your priorities? What should we do first?

The breakout groups discussion around participants' priorities included overarching comments and advice, and specific ideas by sector.

## General Comments

Six general themes emerged in comments related to participant priorities for the CCAP:

Themes	Sample Comments
<p><b>1. Act immediately and quickly to advance climate action.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Need HIGH IMPACT &amp; QUICK WINS”</li> <li>▪ “Put ALL emphasis on climate change, consequences are so dire”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Communicate the urgency of the climate crisis, the benefits of climate action, and what we can all do.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “COMMUNICATE necessity of climate change”</li> <li>▪ “Emphasize benefits to municipalities, corporate benefits (examples)”</li> <li>▪ “Use all channels to talk about CC - mail outs, social media”</li> <li>▪ “we can all point fingers and we won't get anywhere”</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Work closely with municipalities and be clear about individual, municipal and county roles.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “People don't understand what activities will 'help' with climate change and what are the roles of the individual, versus the municipality”</li> <li>▪ “Attitude in some municipalities that the County will take care of Climate Change, we need to WORK together (all municipalities)”</li> <li>▪ “Biggest challenge is trying to keep track on what everyone is doing. Grey Bruce Climate Action Network report is very helpful here. Need to look at municipal activities too and see the idea as a joint initiative”</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “Local municipal councils need to stand behind this plan”</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. County leadership is needed to demonstrate commitment and what is possible, County should also support local community champions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “if leadership is strong, things can change fairly quickly”</li> <li>▪ “Leadership from government is lagging, not enough commitment”</li> <li>▪ “LEADERSHIP at government level”</li> <li>▪ “We need to find local champions”</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Learn from other municipalities and adopt best-practices locally.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “What are other like communities doing about this? That could be helpful.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Plan needs to identify priority actions and implement them.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ “First priority should be to keep it simple and drill down on the priorities and connect with the 9 member municipalities to work together.”</li> <li>▪ “find local and other experts for each of the priorities we are setting. Lots of local expertise, including conservation authorities. Look at reduction of emissions and increase in sequestration and/or carbon sinks. Consult with local scientists and experts, not just local politicians.”</li> </ul>

## Agriculture

Four main themes emerged related to priorities for climate action connected to agriculture:

- 1. Engage with agricultural community in a positive manner recognizing the great work already happening within the agri-food sector.**

  - “Agriculture community feels alienated, looked down upon, hoping Grey County can work better with agriculture communities and organizations.”
  - “Do not want to shame and guilt agriculture communities about climate change”
  - “Need to engage with agriculture in a sensitive way”
  - “Grey Farmers are already doing lots of sustainable work”

2. **Strong interest in “regenerative” agriculture, reduced fertilizer use, and exploration of carbon offset potential.**
  - “Regenerative/ sustainable Ag is important”
  - “Agriculture as the biggest source of carbon needs attention to change to regenerative farming, and more carbon offsets.”
  - “Need for sustainable/regenerative farming techniques”
  - “Need to reduce nitrogen fertilizer in agriculture, which could both reduce emissions and save money for farmer. We should be looking at regenerative agriculture.”
3. **Support biodiversity on farms.**
  - “Massive influence of corporate agriculture. Don't just want large mono-culture crops.”
  - “Need to preserve hedgerows by using local tree by-laws and other tools. Local by-laws need more teeth and enforcement. Increase fines and protection. Not just a private property rights issue”
  - “Assumption that 'bigger is better' in farming, but not necessarily so.”
4. **Expand partnerships and engage existing local expertise.**
  - “Ecological farmers association of Ontario and Farmers for Climate Solutions are both resources for regenerative farming.”
  - “Work with OMAFRA and other ministries too. OMAFRA are the ag. experts.”
  - “Could we form a group with County reps from each County focusing on Agriculture and share resources and ideas.”

We also heard comments suggesting better data is needed about the Grey County agriculture sector, supporting community gardens, the need for low-emissions farm equipment and concerned about sprawl near agricultural lands.

## Buildings

Two themes emerged related to priorities for climate action connected to buildings:

1. **Establish a green development standard for new buildings in Grey County.**
  - “Green development standards - developing voluntary tiers for developers to increase their environmental performance”
  - “green development standards should be a priority”
  - “Putting the building community on notice that the industry standards are changing through the green development standards”
2. **Consider lifecycle emissions of building materials and think about deconstruction policy/programs.**

- “Carbon sequestration - value of a concrete block (carbon cure, etc.) sequester carbon”
- “Explore deconstruction policies (incentives) instead of demolition - Seattle (offers expedited building permit if they deconstruct a building instead of demolish - masonry sector likes this recommendation because 100% of the masonry of a building can be recycled.”
- “New buildings - Paris accord recommends 2030 30% of new buildings should be deconstructable, and by 2050 50% of buildings should be deconstructable “
- “Importance of wood as a construction material; wood is a renewable resource”

There was also some support for the following ideas:

### 3. **Establish a residential retrofit program.**

- “support residents to retrofit their homes”
- “Low hanging fruit is finding efficiencies in our buildings and building retrofits. e.g. program to fund through property taxes - project in Windsor too. Offer packages to homeowners from people who know and have solutions.”

### 4. **Tackle emissions caused by natural gas**

- “ambitious NG free new construction“
- “need to not tiptoe around NG we need to remove”

We also heard comments suggesting the County and municipalities need to stay current with innovations in the building industry, implement low-carbon strategies in our own building construction, and explore using Georgian Bay as a resource for cooling buildings using a deep lake water cooling geothermal system.

## Transportation

There were a limited number of comments related to transportation. Attention was drawn to the rural low-density nature of Grey County, and residents need to drive. Concern was also raised as to whether the electricity grid is ready for the transition to electric vehicles.

- “The fact that we have to drive so much in Grey is concerning.”
- “Can our grid handle EV charging if we all go home and charge?”

## Infrastructure – Natural and Built

Two themes emerged related to priorities for climate action connected to natural and built infrastructure in Grey County:

## **1. Forests are a vital asset in Grey County providing significant value including sequestration, and need to be protected.**

- “Concerns that Grey County forests are being logged. We need to look at other points regarding climate change and how trees are/will be impacted. County needs to pay attention to what happens to the logs grown in managed forests... are they being exported overseas and returned as plywood?”
- “for every tree harvested; plant to replace for sustainable management”
- “Need special provisions in County’s Forest Management By-Law regarding what types of trees (and size) can be harvested”
- “Some pieces missing in report. Trees store CO<sub>2</sub>, but we are losing a lot.”

## **2. Land Use planning needs to consider climate change.**

- “Concerns over draining swamps, changing water patterns”
- “need to abide by protected spaces goals of 30% public and saved”

We also heard comments about increasing the use of permeable paved surfaces to better manage stormwater, and support for shoreline protection.

## **Tourism**

There was discussion about the fact tourism is a significant sector in Grey County and needs to be sustainable:

- “Grey County relies on the outdoor environment (economically & tourism), we need to look after our natural spaces.”
- “Leadership for eco-tourism; sustaining our natural resources.”
- “TBM is a resort town - wrong - it is a community with one pillar of its economic base as a ski hill/resort industry”
- “Grey has had some issues with overcrowding - infrastructure, etc. How can we minimize the impacts of tourism to locals?”

We also heard specific comments related to supporting the RTO7 sustainable tourism program and ensuring that the Talisman resort redevelopment considers climate change.

## Responses to Question 2: What's your reaction to the draft GHG reduction targets?

Comments expressed during the breakout group discussions on targets revolved around a number of themes, with the majority of comments focused on the level of ambition of the targets and the need to align the targets with other levels of government, specifically the federally legislated net-zero by 2050 target adopted as part of the Canadian Net-Zero Accountability Act in the summer of 2021. All comments about the level of ambition of the targets suggested that Grey County should adopt more ambitious targets.

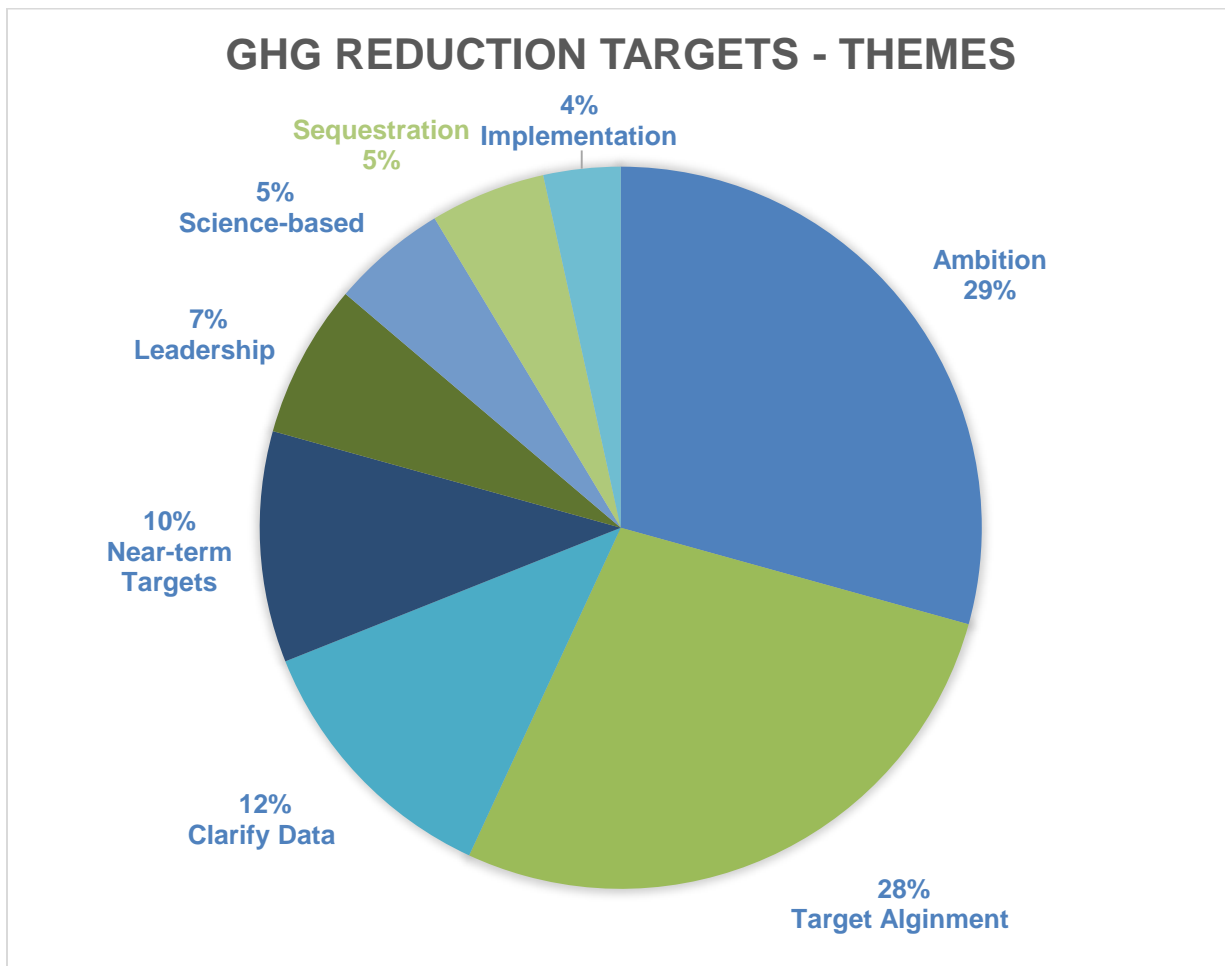


Figure 1: Themes from breakout discussions around the County's current Green House Gas reduction targets

## Discussion Themes

<b><i>Theme</i></b>	<b><i>Sample Comments</i></b>
<b>1. Need greater level of ambition.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Globe and Mail Article - targets for lowering emissions are way too low - we need to get to Net Zero much sooner. Ideally get to Net Zero by 2035.”</li> <li>• “need to take this serious”</li> <li>• “Disappointing and insufficient”</li> <li>• “Targets were overly conservative and too worried about failure and the targets were not met. Need to be more aggressive here and pay a price for how we've lived.”</li> <li>• “Absolute target &amp; stretch target (enables more innovative thinking - would expand beyond where we're expected to go)”</li> </ul>
<b>2. Need to align targets with other levels of government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “At minimum go with federal targets for climate change efforts”</li> <li>• “How do these fit together with the Federal Targets.”</li> <li>• “need to match federal targets or we'll fail on the world stage”</li> <li>• “Not even equivalent to neighbouring counties”</li> <li>• “How do we align our plan with provincial / municipal targets, so we are not doing things that are redundant?”</li> </ul>
<b>3. Desire for greater clarity about data and baseline values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Need to establish a better context - make it understandable to the public.”</li> <li>• “Some lack of clarity about what the targets 'mean' and what they entail for people of the County. Need for more education about these concepts. Feel that as a non-expert, difficult to make decision on our targets.”</li> <li>• “50% of emissions under control of local governments. Need to clarify this in an easy to understand and graphic way. This 50% number is an eye-opener.”</li> </ul>
<b>4. Need to focus on near-term targets, not just 2050</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Need more frequent targets, have a target for every 5 years, this would keep us on track and highlight areas where we'll need to work harder.”</li> <li>• “there should be earlier dates for higher targets”</li> <li>• “Take the 2030 target seriously, if we don't achieve this target, it will create more pressure for more dramatic action (increase in regulations, etc.) to meet 2050 targets.”</li> </ul>

<b>5. Desire for leadership from the County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We want to be a leader... but these figures do not demonstrate leadership targets. We can't set the bar low.</li> <li>• “municipalities should take leadership”</li> <li>• “Grey County's vision statement - how do we want to go about being a CLIMATE LEADER?”</li> </ul>
<b>6. Adopt “science-based” targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Defer answer on the targets to science. It's not about what we want it's about what is needed.”</li> <li>• “These shouldn't be political decisions, should be science based decisions - are the targets achievable?”</li> <li>• “Make it the number that it's supposed to be, to achieve the Paris Accord requirement - 1.5”</li> </ul>
<b>7. Sequestration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Do the targets take into effect sequestration and the value of carbon credits”</li> <li>• “We need a target for OUTPUT and how we SEQUESTER carbon”</li> </ul>
<b>8. Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “HOW do we get to these targets?”</li> <li>• “Need to close the gap on the targets with feasible plan to meet the targets.”</li> </ul>

Responses to Question 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.)?

Breakout group discussions in response to Question Three covered a wide range of topics. Comments ranged from specific organizations the County was encouraged to connect with to general advice on the need to take immediate action. Broadly, nine core themes emerged, as follows:

1. The need to **build strong partnerships** with a diversity of residents and stakeholders,
2. the importance of **education and outreach**,
3. the critical **role of municipalities**,
4. the importance and opportunity of **economic development tied to climate action**,
5. potential sources and approaches to **funding**,

- 6. desire for **leadership from the County**,
- 7. support for a **regulatory approach**,
- 8. need to work with **other levels of government** and
- 9. **need to take action**.

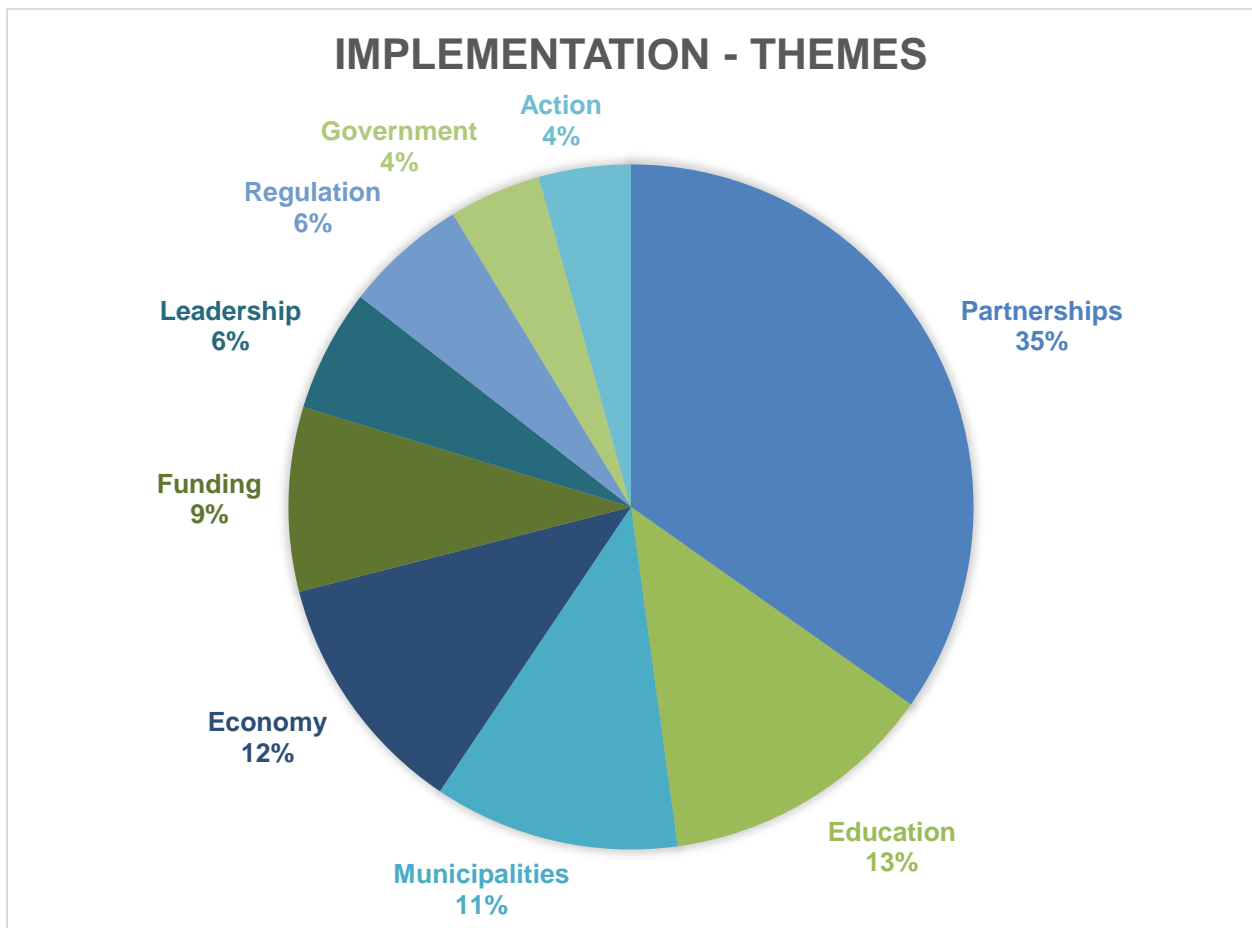


Figure 2: Themes from breakout discussions around implementation of climate action

## Discussion Themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sample Comments</i>
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<p><b>1. Build strong and diverse partnerships for implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Farmers have a big role to play. (but recognition that municipalities don’t have much control over agriculture) Need to work with Farmers Union.”</li> <li>• “Poverty task force and healthy communities initiatives - how can we think about creative partnerships that will help leverage existing resources and offer new solutions”</li> <li>• “intersectoral partnerships, throughout COVID we have come to discover some 'unlikely' partnerships”</li> <li>• “Movement in Grey, Bruce, Simcoe etc. citizen-based climate action groups should be blended with municipal staff. County should blend with and work with community groups. Needs collaboration.”</li> <li>• “Opportunities to work with other municipalities/Counties for economic partnership.. Ex: Honda plant in Alliston, to improve electric vehicles.”</li> <li>• “Connecting with Bruce trail conservancy, Owen Sound field naturalists, Grey Bruce woodlands association - connect with all the groups that are working to increase tree canopy.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Education and engagement in a non-confrontational way with all residents, especially youth.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We all need to be engaged. So much local knowledge and expertise that needs to be consulted with.”</li> <li>• “we can communicate with anyone and try to make sure we don't tick them off”</li> <li>• “Engage school kids and train the future leaders there and get them excited about this change. Schools are a really important focus - talk to guidance councillors too.”</li> <li>• “asking people questions engages residents”</li> <li>• “Education is an important piece in general”</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. County must work collaboratively with member municipalities and support action.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We need to set guidelines to be sure we're all working together and that the CCAP for Grey should apply to all 9 municipalities.”</li> <li>• “County to work collaboratively with member municipalities. “</li> <li>• “Push our municipalities to move ahead with climate action”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “With member municipalities get commitment between County and Municipalities to work together i.e. a mutual agreement to help implement the plan and develop supportive local plans.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Focus on the economic opportunities and local job creation of climate action.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Job creation is really important - bottom line in any initiative like this, someone has an opportunity to make money.”</li> <li>• “source local products and keep economy local - job creation, information sharing”</li> <li>• “To create jobs in climate change technology. We really need solar panel installers. Possibly work with Georgian College to train people for the jobs of the future.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Look for funding through grants and cultivate local climate philanthropy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “funded by provincial government - to be able to leverage some of these initiatives tourism businesses are undertaking because we see this as beneficial to all”</li> <li>• “Look at granting opportunities for funding (AMO, Community Foundations) to encourage and initiate initiatives”</li> <li>• “start a philosophy of donation to your community to start to help climate change initiatives”</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Desire for leadership from the County</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “If the County could be a leader (less than net zero), we could lead in 'how' to be stewards of our environment. This could/should be centred in our education, conservation approaches, etc.”</li> <li>• “Government has leadership role.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Support for regulatory approach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Don't just engage - legislate.”</li> <li>• “The option of wasting / pollution should not be available to people. Strong policies required.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Needs to be alignment with all orders of government (federal, provincial, county, municipal).</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Change is needed at all levels of government.”</li> <li>• “need to look at each key sector and look at how levels of government interface”</li> <li>• “how do we reach a goal if we're not all aligned”</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Take action, don't just talk about it.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “we need to do more than talk about it”</li> <li>• “what can a county act on now? what doesn't need more research”</li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “don't reinvent the wheel”</li></ul> |
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## Engagement with Indigenous Communities

The draft CCAP states (pg. 25):

*“Inherently built upon and grounded in generations of place-based observations and experiences, Indigenous knowledge systems are central to a thorough understanding of how people perceive, understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change. During the implementation phase of this plan, Grey County will seek to build a trusted partnership with the Indigenous communities and organizations located within the County to ensure their feedback and knowledge is integrated into the Plan, and to garner their support in implementing a number of the strategies within with CCAP. Building on this partnership ensures that we can better consider and integrate Indigenous perspectives, cultural values, and knowledge into the planning and implementation of climate change mitigation activities into the long-term.”*

Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) indicated they are not resourced at this time to provide a comprehensive review of the draft but communicated a reminder that Grey County is on the traditional territory of SON, and as such the CCAP should be specific in referencing this, not generally alluding to “Indigenous communities and organizations.”

Building on an existing relationship between Grey County and the M’Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre County staff received the feedback that the CCAP needs to work with Elders and Knowledge Keepers as we move forward, and the suggestion that the CCAP be edited to emphasize meaningful, iterative collaboration;

*“Grey County will seek to build **meaningful collaboration** with the Indigenous communities and organizations located within the County to **nurture their contribution and guidance, and ensure their feedback is integrated into the Plan.**”*

## Stakeholder Submissions

We received written submissions from six organizations and their submissions are attached in Appendix 1. We also received email comments from an additional organization. The organizations included representatives from the agricultural sector (Grey Federation of

Agriculture, and Grey County Agricultural Services – that consolidated comments from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture); the social sector (Grey Bruce Poverty Task Force); the energy sector (Nuclear Innovation Institute), the conservation sector (Grey Sauble Conservation Authority), the tourism sector (RTO7) as well as a community-based advocacy group (Grey Bruce Climate Action Network). The key stakeholder points are summarized below:

<i>Organization / Interest Group</i>	<i>Summary of Comments Received</i>
<p><i>Grey County Agricultural Services (Grey Agricultural Services reached out to and consolidated feedback from OMAFRA and OFA)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grey County farmers are already implementing many sustainable practices and the CCAP needs to recognize this and collect better data on the current local practices.</li> <li>▪ The Agricultural sector needs to be better represented in the development and implementation of the CCAP.</li> <li>▪ Nature-based climate solutions on farms are an essential opportunity to explore, particularly pasture management; look at the Canada Grassland Protocol.</li> <li>▪ Much of what is produced in Grey County is consumed elsewhere, this needs to be acknowledged and lifecycle emissions should be considered.</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure is needed to support agri-sector sustainability, including improved internet and cell service and local abattoirs.</li> <li>▪ Think carefully about anaerobic digestion technology and make sure it makes sense when manure is valuable on-farm organic matter.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Grey Bruce Climate Action Network (GBCAN)</i></p>	<p>GBCAN provided a comprehensive review and detailed recommendations regarding the entire report.</p> <p>General comments included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Match or exceed overall federal GHG reduction targets.</li> <li>▪ Look at nature-based solutions, promote sequestration activities and create better data on the role of nature in climate action in Grey County.</li> <li>▪ County should coordinate with member municipalities to ensure action is being taken at all levels.</li> <li>▪ Engage deeply and often with GBCAN and other essential stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Establish a monitoring and reporting framework for the CCAP and convene an expert advisory committee to formally review</li> </ul>

the plan every two years. Report publicly on progress annually.

- **Buildings**

- Fast track Green Development Standard targets; build on other communities' best practices.
- Increase ambition of residential and commercial/institutional building energy retrofit programs.

- **Transportation**

- Include hydrogen fuel cell technology in the plan; support “zero-emissions” vehicles not just EVs, look at resilience potential of smart chargers for power grid back-up.
- Support active transportation with bike rack installation at municipal buildings and parks, and also bike lanes, signage and biking info.
- Expand rural bus routes and include connection to GO Service and large cities further south.

- **Waste**

- Advocate for zero organic waste in landfills.
- Work with municipalities to educate on waste reduction, particularly food waste, and develop food diversion programs such as Second Harvest.
- Support reuse programs and concepts such as swap days and tools sharing; partner with Habitat for Humanity.

- **Agriculture**

- Research further the costs and benefits of anerobic digestion to understand if it makes sense in Grey County.
- Continue to support local agriculture, map local resources, explore tax incentives for local food growers; collect better data.
- Work with partners, including Universities, to study local agriculture practices and share best practices on low-carbon agriculture.
- Develop programs to support on-farm carbon sequestration.

- **Land-use Planning**

- Focus on natural infrastructure wherever possible and include financial value of assets in planning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allocate resources to support residents dealing with extreme weather.</li> <li>○ Clarify what is proposed for tree planting beyond existing CA programs; include public-private partnerships with local “rewilding” businesses.</li> <li>○ Protect fence and hedgerows and consider biodiversity preservation as well as tree protection.</li> <li>○ Look at mixed-use zoning, eliminate minimum house size, reduce paved areas in new development.</li> <li>○ Consult fully on any public land sales.</li> <li>▪ <b>Renewable Energy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collect complete data on existing renewable energy systems, not just grid-connected installations.</li> <li>○ Encourage farmers to install solar PV as an income stream.</li> <li>○ Work with Georgian College to train solar installers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Shorelines &amp; Wetlands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clearly identify Conservation Authorities as partners.</li> <li>○ Regulate building at shorelines more closely; provide details on the monitoring program.</li> <li>○ Map and protect all wetlands.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>Corporate Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since outdoor lighting has a limited GHG impact, deprioritize LED retrofits and ensure lighting is at the appropriate level.</li> <li>○ Raise the ambition of County-building retrofit and solar PV installation targets.</li> <li>○ Make sure modelled actions meet the corporate target.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><i>Grey Bruce Poverty Taskforce</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a deep <b>interconnection between poverty and climate change</b>. Residents experiencing poverty are at greatest risk of the negative impacts of climate change, for example food access issues due to supply chain impacts of extreme weather.</li> <li>▪ <b>Improved public transit</b> would be a benefit to low-income residents and increase their mobility.</li> <li>▪ Programs to improve the energy efficiency of homes have the potential to <b>reduce energy poverty</b> in Grey County.</li> <li>▪ Programs to <b>reduce food waste</b> through diversion to community food access programs, and programs to support</li> </ul>

	<p>local community agriculture benefit both the climate and low-income residents.</p>
<p><i>Grey Bruce Federation of Agriculture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critical to <b>directly consult farmers</b> in the development and roll-out of any agriculture-focused policies and programs.</li> <li>▪ CCAP needs more <b>clarity around the concept and definition of “regenerative agriculture”</b>.</li> <li>▪ Important to recognize that the <b>agriculture sector is part of the climate change solution</b> and is already contributing significantly to the region’s sustainability.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Grey Sauble Conservation Authority</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better leverage existing the relationships with Conservations Authorities and the sustainability programs they deliver; possibility to develop a <b>tree-planting incentive program</b> delivered by CAs.</li> <li>▪ Provide more clarity around the coordination and support role the County will play with member municipalities.</li> <li>▪ Any programs for buildings – green development standard, energy efficiency retrofits – should also include <b>nature-based solutions</b> such as tree planting, and preservation of existing green infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ GSCA and other <b>CAs can act as a resource hub</b> on topics such as sustainable agriculture, shoreline erosion prevention.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to <b>update and better share existing data and mapping</b> related to flooding, wetlands and shoreline erosion.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Nuclear Innovation Institute</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunity to recognize the <b>Clean Energy Frontier program</b> in the CCAP highlighting the role of Grey County as a clean energy leader in the Ontario.</li> <li>▪ Leverage information in <b>NII’s report “Plugging In: Why Bruce, Grey and Huron must prepare for the electric vehicle future”</b> To support the development of public charging infrastructure, and market Grey County as an EV friendly tourist destination.</li> <li>▪ Support for carbon offset programs and local sequestration and on-farm decarbonization projects through the <b>Carbon Offset Coalition</b>.</li> <li>▪ <b>Streamline existing by-laws and policies to remove barriers to clean energy development</b> and in collaboration with local utilities establish a web page that includes all</li> </ul>



	information needed to develop different types of renewable energy locally.
RT07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Emphasize “responsible” tourism</b>, especially in the context of recent tourism growth.</li> <li>▪ Promote RT07’s existing <b>Sustainable Tourism Implementation Program</b> in an effort to increase participation.</li> <li>▪ <b>Leverage strong agri-food sector</b> in Grey County to continue to support local food.</li> </ul>

## Presentations and Discussions

Four formal committees (including at two at the county level, and two at the municipal level) requested presentations on the draft CCAP. The feedback provided during the discussion afterwards is documented in the linked minutes and informs the overall engagement findings:

- Blue Mountain Sustainability Committee (November 3, 2021)  
<https://pub-bluemountains.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=7627>
- Georgian Bluffs Climate Action Committee (September 17, 2021)  
<https://calendar.georgianbluffs.ca/council/Detail/2021-09-17-1000-Climate-Action-Committee/402b5053-a79c-4e5a-aa10-adce010ae5e9>
- Grey County Agricultural Advisory Committee (October 21, 2021) -  
<https://council.grey.ca/meeting/getPDFRendition?documentObjectId=e7bbd347-b1f0-4cbd-a02a-4d7aaf3e3cda>
- Grey County Tourism Advisory Committee (November 17, 2021)  
<https://council.grey.ca/meeting/getPDFRendition?documentObjectId=c6867356-f5fc-46db-8bd2-8afd5062dfc8>

Staff of member municipalities are also engaged and providing feedback through the staff Climate Change Community of Practice.

## Public Comments

Public comments were invited by email from July 2021 until November 5, 2021. In October, three guiding questions were posted to the County website, but comments were received on all elements of the draft CCAP. Eleven residents volunteered their time and provided 32 pages of



written comments. With permission from those that consented, their comments are included in Appendix 2 with contact details removed.

Ideas from these submissions were identified and transferred into an excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Key themes that emerged are described below and subdivide into "General Comments" and "Sector-specific Comments" (e.g. Agriculture, Buildings, Transportation etc.).

## General Comments

The main general comments received by members of the public at large included:

1. ***The County needs to act now and with ambition.*** Submissions described the urgency of the issue, the need for more aggressive targets. Of the eight submissions that explicitly mentioned the level of ambition of the GHG reduction targets all suggested more ambition. Only one submission suggested limiting the County's investment in climate action due to our comparatively small contribution on the global stage. The idea that targets should be "science-based" and aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees as per the Paris agreement was mentioned in multiple submissions.
2. ***Concern the CCAP is too general, does not sufficiently consider the local context and needs a prioritized set of actions.*** Many submissions suggested the CCAP is too general and the recommended actions aren't developed enough, they lack specific targets or activities. A prioritized action plan was suggested that identifies where the County has the most influence and can make the biggest impact. Also concern that the CCAP doesn't make enough specific recommendations that build on Grey County's unique natural heritage and greater attention should be paid to nature-based solutions and sequestration.
3. ***Public engagement and education will be critical to success.*** Submissions suggested recruiting volunteers and working with established volunteer organizations to build awareness on the issue of climate change and support local climate action like tree planting or energy conservation. A speaker series, social media posts and workshops were all suggested as possible engagement approaches.

The submissions also included comments related to reconciliation. One submission referenced *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, the Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and its statement, "Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aboriginal perspective, also requires reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings resolve problems between themselves

but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete." (pg 18). Suggestions were made to connect with local Indigenous Elders, include a Land Acknowledgement in the CCAP, and to focus on relationship building with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

Natural gas was also addressed in a number of submissions, with suggestions that the expansion of the natural gas pipeline network is in contradiction to the need to switch away from fossil fuels.

## Themed Submission Comments by Sector

<p><b>Agriculture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think carefully about anaerobic digestion technologies, weigh the benefits against on-farm use of manure.</li> <li>• Acknowledge the sustainability work already happening locally in sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>• Increase accessibility of local food.</li> <li>• Leverage existing agricultural capacity building networks rather than create new ones (e.g. Ontario Soil Network)</li> <li>• Establish incentives for low-carbon farming (e.g. no-till, sequestration credits for grasslands etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Buildings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to look at embodied carbon of construction materials (e.g. explore timber frame and wooden bridges)</li> <li>• Grey County facilitates many lower-tier subdivision processes - make green development standards compulsory – have a menu/scoring of options available.</li> <li>• Explore limiting natural gas hook-ups in new developments.</li> <li>• Clarify the financing mechanisms of the retrofit proposed retrofit programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at remote meetings and working as was to reduce transportation GHGs.</li> <li>• Expand local transit service including to Southern centres.</li> <li>• Look at hydrogen vehicles for heavy transport.</li> <li>• Support for EVs and charging infrastructure given Grey County's low-density rural nature.</li> <li>• Explore County-wide electric bikeshare program.</li> </ul>

<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen protection for natural infrastructure including forests and wetlands through the County Forest By-law and other mechanisms.</li> <li>• Use natural infrastructure wherever possible to manage flooding, for cooling etc.</li> <li>• Include natural assets in asset management plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Energy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore unique potential of Grey County of renewable energy innovation.</li> <li>• Support the hydrogen hub emerging in Grey County.</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore re-use and repair programs and support “right-to-repair” policy efforts.</li> <li>• Consider curbside organics pick-up and including anerobic digestion in municipal waste management programs.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

County staff extend our sincere gratitude to all the individuals and stakeholders that participated in the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) Phase 2 engagement process. Your ideas, expertise, and offers to help are the foundation of a successful climate action program in Grey County. Engagement will be ongoing as the CCAP is finalized and the backbone of program implementation going forward.

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](#)

