



Date: 2021-02-26

From:

Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Officer, and
Brittany Drury, Clerk

Subject: Climate Action Plan for Georgian Bluffs - An Introduction

Report: CAO2021-01

Recommendation

- That Committee of Council accept this report entitled Climate Action Plan for Georgian Bluffs – An Introduction, for information purposes only;
- That Committee of Council, committed to a sustainable future and environmental leadership, endorse the Township of Georgian Bluffs becoming members of:
 - Partners for Climate Change (\$0 cost) – effective immediately
 - Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (\$20,000.00) – following 2021 budget approval; and
- That staff be directed to schedule a special Council meeting to facilitate a session between Council and the Climate Action Committee to discuss strategies, direction, ask questions, and help raise awareness.

Background

Climate change is affecting citizens around the world, including Canadian communities from coast to coast, and ratepayers in Georgian Bluffs. It is important to realize that the cost of doing nothing towards sustainability will far outweigh the costs of taking proactive steps now to contribute towards the collective good. As a municipality, Georgian Bluffs needs to minimize our carbon footprint and set the example for residents and other like-minded jurisdictions to follow and do their part.

As a leading municipality, the Township needs to help educate and inspire everyone within our Town to unite as professionals, communities, farmers, business owners and

residents for a common purpose and goal, to help keep each other accountable and motivated. The Township, in conjunction with Grey County, needs to model the way towards a responsible climate action plan that will identify a road map towards environmental sustainability.

The Township of Georgian Bluffs has taken a very important first step on this journey by creating a Climate Action Committee, comprised of residents and Council members that share a passion for a more sustainable world. Acting as an advisory committee working with staff, the committee will make recommendations for Council's consideration. With relatively small budgets, local governments are taking important steps to act responsibly in areas that they can directly impact, that are of local concern, and that can provide greater returns to the communities they represent.

The Climate Action Committee has already met several times, making important and significant progress into various topics including:

- Discussing ways to bring awareness to climate change,
- Leverage the experiences of other jurisdictions that started this initiative years ago, so the Township can, in a financially responsible way, learn from and eventually leapfrog to become leaders,
- Explore partnership opportunities with like-minded organizations
- Become members in leading climate change organizations like Partners for Climate Change (PCP) and Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC)
- Discussing a “green mindset” within both the administration, Council members and the public where decisions are made through a “climate lens”,
- Exploring all available grant opportunities to fund many Council-approved initiatives,
- Incorporating climate change into legislatively-required Asset Management Plans,
- Strategies to leverage our natural-based assets as a community strength for a sustainable future

- Inviting representatives of Grey County to present and share the County's "Climate Change Action Plan"

Analysis

Council will soon be commencing their 2021 budget deliberations - now is the appropriate time to help provide context and insight into required sustainability and climate action plans. The process will not be a quick nor easy one, but one that is required nonetheless. Transforming a culture and changing the thought patterns and habits of staff and ratepayers alike will take time. The Township, its elected officials, and its senior leaders need to model the way and demonstrate that a climate action "lens" will be applied to all decisions and action plans moving forward, similar to steps taken concerning accessibility years ago. Governments took accessibility seriously and vastly improved accessibility for all in our communities. Climate action requires a similar commitment and approach to transforming Georgian Bluffs and the region in general.

Studies and trends continue to confirm that incidents related to climate change are on the rise, including flooding and fires, rising water levels and severe weather incidents, together starting to cost governments, insurers, private businesses and residents billions annually. Understanding that local level governments are on the front line of these new realities, leaders in Georgian Bluffs have started to think about next steps to help mitigate risks and contribute to climate change initiatives – green roofs on buildings, sustainable planning, road networks for more than just cars, water conservation, etc. all require consideration during the decision-making process.

Over the next few years, with Council's direction, the Township and its ratepayers will benefit from both tried and tested programs, unique and targeted initiatives, increased awareness and education programs, and measurable successes. Various action plans will be commenced, including a Council-approved Climate Action Plan, Community Energy Plan, and ultimately a Climate Adaption Capital Program. Combined, the strategy will reduce the Township's carbon footprint and Green House Gas emissions to do our part in protecting our planet and our residents from climate change events.

Building off the natural beauty of the Niagara Escarpment, the scenic vistas, the countless natural trails, waterfalls, green space, the Township of Georgian Bluffs will become a leader in climate change and awareness programs, in collaboration with industry leaders, community experts, and interested residents.

Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) and Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC)

To assist in development of the Council-approved Climate Action Plan, Community Energy Plan, and ultimately the Climate Adaption Capital Program, staff have investigated membership in both the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) and Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC) programs. Addressing mitigation and adaptation from a climate lens, both programs establish milestones, goals and benchmarks for observance throughout the climate action planning process.

	Partners for Climate Protection (PCP)	Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC)
Membership Fee	No charge.	Less than 50,000 in population = \$20,000.00 (one time fee)
Implementation	Resolution to be passed by Council supporting membership.	Payment of fee through ICLEI Canada (Local Governments for Sustainability Canada)
Framework	Mitigation focused. Five milestones.	Adaptation focused. Five milestones.
Benefits	Creates an emissions baseline, sets targets for reductions and actions for monitoring and maintaining set reductions. Membership provides municipalities access to tools, case studies, and other informational resources.	Completion of Vulnerability and Risk Assessments, adaptation actions and a plan to implement said actions. Membership provides each municipality with planning and research assistance.
Other users	Over 450 Canadian municipalities enrolled.	77+ Canadian municipalities currently active, including Barrie and Caledon.
Website	https://fcm.ca/en/programs/partners-climate-protection	https://icleicanada.org/barc-program/

In considering climate comparators to the Township, including Huron Kinloss, both programs were used collaboratively throughout development of the Climate Action Plan. It is anticipated that through on-boarding of a climate planning consultant, the Township will commence moving through each milestone, with projected dates of completion to be determined in conjunction with said consultant.

Milestones	Partners for Climate Protection (PCP)	Building Adaptive & Resilient Communities (BARC)
1	<p>Creating a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Forecast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build mitigation team. • Collect data for baseline. • Measure / quantify baseline emissions. • Develop energy forecasts. 	<p>Initiate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Climate Change Adaptation Team. Should be a mix of municipal and community members. • Evaluate actions the Township has already taken to increase resilience to climate change.
2	<p>Setting an Emissions Reduction Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine green house gas reduction targets. • Receive Council endorsement – Council must adopt the reduction target prior to moving forward. 	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline and evaluate climatic projections for the Township. • Develop impact statements: how the township could be impacted by weather variables. • Vulnerability assessment: measure the Township’s ability to manage identified impacts. • Risk assessment: the likelihood of an impact occurring, and its negative consequences to the community’s built, social, environmental, and ecological systems.

3	<p>Developing a Local Action Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mitigation goals and objectives. • Identify mitigation actions. • Evaluate green house gas reduction potential of identified mitigation actions. • Create a mitigation plan. 	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a vision statement, goals and objectives regarding adaptation planning. • Create a long list of adaptation actions, to address impacts identified as a priority in Milestone 2. • Consult baseline data to identify expected outcomes. • Create draft adaptation plan.
4	<p>Implement the mitigation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the plan to Council for approval. • Report on successes. 	<p>Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the plan to Council for approval. • Report on successes.
5	<p>Monitor progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track progress. 	<p>Monitor / Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track progress. • Investigate future adaptation options. • Revise plan.

As previously discussed by Committee, the County of Grey has also commenced climate action planning, having created, circulated, and advertised a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services to create a workplan. The County has awarded the contract to ICLEI Canada, which has also worked with multiple municipalities throughout Ontario. Attached for Committee’s information is the RFP, ICLEI’s submitted proposal and an informational presentation regarding the County’s progress thus far. Staff are committed to approaching climate action planning collaboratively, identifying methods of working jointly with both upper and lower tiers in the Grey Bruce region.

Financial Impact

Currently, initial budget requirements total \$150,000 over a three-year period, starting in 2021. The draft 2021 budget includes a request of \$50,000 to become members of Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) and to kick-off the project by hiring a consultant to develop a Plan, calculate and confirm baseline emissions, recommend a prioritized long-term work plan, and recommend a sustainable resource plan to carry out the required work.

To date, staff have identified two potential grant funding streams for exploring, including those available through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Municipal Energy Plan program. The Municipal Energy Plan program is available to municipalities to assist in the climate action planning process, with available funding of up to \$90,000.00 for creation of the plan and \$25,000.00 for maintenance and implementation. Further, the Township is investigating partnership opportunities to increase grant mining and application capacities, with more information to be presented in the third quarter of this year.

Strategic Priorities

This report supports the Strategic Plan by demonstrating environmental stewardship, improving communications, collaboration and transparency, and delivering effective and cost-efficient services.

Conclusion

The impacts of climate change continue to develop and place stress on communities, both on a global and local scale. The Township of Georgian Bluffs has taken a vital first step in promoting sustainability via development of a Climate Action Committee, and the Committee's commitment towards development of a Climate Action Plan. It is recommended that climate action planning remain a priority of the Township throughout the next 3-5 years, and beyond.

Appendix A – Informational Presentation – Grey County Climate Action Plan

Appendix B – Request for Proposals – Grey County Climate Consultant

Appendix C – RFP Submission – ICLEI Canada (redacted)

Respectfully Submitted:

Al Meneses, Chief Administrative Office
Brittany Drury, Clerk

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Climate Action Plan.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- CCAP Presentation - Municipal CAO's Feb 12th PDF.pdf- RFP-Climate Change Action Consultant.pdf- ICLEI Proposal original Redacted - CCAP.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Feb 18, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jenn Burnett

Tim Lewis

Steven Dollmaier

Janet Hilts

Kassandra Rocca