
Subject: Climate Change Framework

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Recommendations

1. That the work program contained within Appendix 1 of Report PDS 22-2018 for the climate change component of the new Regional Official Plan **BE ENDORSED**;
2. That development of an integrated corporate climate change strategy **BE REFERRED** for consideration in the new Council Strategic Plan for 2019-2022, should climate change be identified as a Council priority; and,
3. That a copy of Report PDS 22-2018 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the work program for the climate change component of the new Official Plan (Appendix 1).
- The *Planning Act* identifies climate change as a matter of provincial interest and requires climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in municipal official plans.
- There are both corporate and community approaches to addressing climate change. The Official Plan is predominantly a community approach, as climate change must be addressed in many different areas of the Official Plan relating to the community at large. However, the Official Plan must also reference certain corporate climate change initiatives relating to Niagara Region's municipal facilities and operations.
- Corporate climate change initiatives are undertaken by various departments at Niagara Region to meet provincial legislative and regulatory requirements. However, there is currently no dedicated unit or staff responsible for the general oversight, coordination or strategic planning for climate change at the Region.
- Planning and Development Services has engaged the Corporate Leadership Team regarding potential opportunities relating to climate change from the corporate perspective. If climate change is identified as a Council priority for the

next term of Council, there may be a number of opportunities to enhance coordination and strategic oversight for climate change initiatives at the Region.

Financial Considerations

The completion of the climate change work program for the new Official Plan will require staff resources. These costs can be accommodated within the Council approved Official Plan Project budget.

Analysis

Mandatory Provincial Direction

The existing Official Plan contains basic policies relating to climate change mitigation. Since the policies came into effect, the legislative and policy requirements relating to climate change have evolved considerably. This includes amendments to the *Planning Act* to identify climate change as a matter of provincial interest and require climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in municipal Official Plans. The Province also released a new provincial land use planning policy framework for climate change. As such, the new Official Plan is required to contain climate change policies that align with the new provincial policy framework. See Appendix 2 for an overview of the existing Official Plan policies and new provincial direction on climate change.

Climate Change Framework

Planning staff consulted with the Area Planners Group and the Local Area Municipalities on the development of the climate change framework in early 2018. During these discussions, it was recognized that climate change impacts many different areas of the Official Plan and is an important component of the overall initiative. In addition, it was requested that the Region provide clear direction to the Local Area Municipalities on climate change. See Appendix 3 for an overview of the consultation activities to develop the framework and the input received.

The climate change work program will ensure that the new Official Plan aligns with provincial land use planning policy requirements and reflects new research and best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Up-to-date policies will help to protect public health and safety and protect personal property. The climate change work program will include undertaking research, analysis and consultation to develop new climate change policies for the Official Plan. More specifically, the climate change work program will include:

1. A climate change discussion paper
2. Developing and evaluating policy approaches suitable for the Niagara context
3. Developing climate change policies for the Official Plan
4. Considering policies and other tools to support implementation

See Appendix 1 for an overview of the climate change work program and supporting consultation and engagement activities.

The Corporate Connection

Many municipalities approach climate change on two fronts: corporate and community. Corporate initiatives address municipal facilities and operations, whereas community initiatives generally address broader community-wide matters such as the built environment.

While the Official Plan is predominantly a community-based approach to addressing climate change, it will contain references to certain corporate initiatives, as per provincial requirements in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Official Plan work program therefore highlights the need to identify what initiatives Niagara Region as a corporation is undertaking in relation to climate change. It also raises the question of whether Niagara Region may wish to undertake any additional work, beyond minimum provincial requirements, to maximize potential opportunities for the corporation and community residents, businesses and visitors.

Examples of Corporate and Community Approaches to Climate Change at Niagara Region

Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection Program, Niagara Region developed greenhouse gas inventories, forecasts, emissions reduction targets and action plans on both the corporate and community side. These action plans are no longer being monitored and reported on. See Appendix 4 for a summary of the Partners for Climate Protection Program.

Based on a preliminary review, examples of other corporate initiatives that may directly or indirectly address climate change include the Region's Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan 2014-2018 and Asset Management Plan, 2017. Examples of other community initiatives include the Region's Sustainable Niagara Action Plan, 2012 and the Regional Official Plan.

It is anticipated that the internal Climate Change Working Group for the Official Plan will assist with drawing linkages to corporate initiatives across the organization and drafting appropriate policies for the Official Plan. The Working Group will focus specifically on the work required for the Official Plan, and is not intended to produce a comprehensive understanding of all regional initiatives or any broader strategic plans.

On April 19, 2018, Planning and Development Services engaged the Corporate Leadership Team to discuss the Official Plan work program and the corporate connection. Should Niagara Region wish to undertake further work on climate change, beyond minimum provincial requirements, it was suggested that climate change could be considered in the development of the new Council Strategic Plan for 2019-2022. In addition, a range of implementing actions could be taken. Examples include research projects relating to municipal best practices, value for money, return on investment,

economic opportunities, etc. Council could also consider developing a longer term corporate climate change strategy (e.g. a 10-15 year strategy) to enhance coordination and strategic direction for climate change initiatives at Niagara Region.

Alternatives Reviewed

The alternative would be for Committee and Council to not endorse the climate change work program. This is not recommended as the *Planning Act* requires municipal Official Plans to include climate change mitigation and adaptation policies.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The climate change work program is part of the new Regional Official Plan which will assist in implementing Council's Strategic Priority of Innovation, Investment & Entrepreneurship.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS 3-2018 New Official Plan Update
- PDS 41-2017 High Level Official Plan Process Framework
- PDS 20-2016 Regional Official Plan Update

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APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE WORK PROGRAM

The climate change work program for the new Official Plan comprises six phases:

Project Phase	Activities
1. Project Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare work program • Initiate discussions with Regional departments, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority • Prepare Term of Reference and form internal working group
2. Discussion Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare discussion paper which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative/policy context ○ Development/evaluation of policy approaches suitable for the Niagara context ○ Preliminary recommendations
3. Consultation #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult on discussion paper
4. Develop OP Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop draft Official Plan policies on climate change
5. Consultation #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult on draft Official Plan policies
6. Other Implementation Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize tools required for implementation

Reporting to Committee and Council

Reporting to Committee and Council will include the following:

- Phase 1 – Climate Change Work Program (this report)
- Phase 3 – Consultation on Discussion Paper
- Phase 5 – Consultation on Draft Official Plan Policies

Additional memos and correspondence may be provided to give status updates and address emerging issues or items of interest over the course of the work program.

Consultation and Engagement

It is anticipated that the climate change policies will be highly integrated throughout the Official Plan. As such, it will be critical to ensure coordination and alignment with other work programs for the Official Plan. In addition, other Regional departments and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority will be engaged and consulted throughout the climate change work program as needed, where their interests and operations may intersect with the Official Plan policies.

This coordination and alignment will be formalized through the development of an internal Climate Change Working Group with representation from interested/affected Regional departments. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority will also be invited to participate. A mandate and Terms of Reference for the Working Group will be developed as part of the Phase 1 work.

In addition, other committees, working groups, etc. will be leveraged to address specific climate change topics at various points throughout the climate change work program. For example, the Technical Advisory Committee for the Natural Environment Work Program for the Official Plan could be engaged to discuss climate change opportunities from a natural heritage perspective. It is anticipated that some of these groups will have representation from the Local Area Municipalities and the Province.

To supplement these consultations, the Area Planners Group will be engaged regularly on the climate change work program. This will help to ensure that local issues, opportunities and implementation are adequately considered and reflected, as appropriate, in the development of policy options and implementation tools.

Formal consultations will be completed during Phases 3 and 5 of the work program. A range of partners and stakeholders will be engaged during these phases, including but not limited to:

- Committee and Council
- Planning Advisory Committee
- Area Planners Group
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Academic Institutions
- Agricultural Policy and Action Committee
- Agricultural Stakeholders
- Environmental Stakeholders
- Development Community
- The Public

An Indigenous Engagement Strategy for the Official Plan work program is currently being developed. Consultation and engagement for the climate change work program will be consistent with the overall strategy.

Following the completion of the climate change work program there will be a process to ensure alignment across all sections of the new Official Plan. Then there will be a statutory public meeting, and the Official Plan will be brought to Council for adoption as a single comprehensive document.

APPENDIX 2: MANDATORY PROVINCIAL DIRECTION

Niagara Region Official Plan

The existing Official Plan contains 'Air Quality and Climate Change' policies in Chapter 7 – Natural Environment, as well as other policies throughout the Official Plan that support climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives. The 'Implementation Measures' contained in Chapter 7 also indicate how Niagara Region will lead by example and demonstrate environmental responsibility through its own operations. The Natural Environment polices were introduced through Amendment 187 to the Official Plan, which was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on April 16, 2008.

The Air Quality and Climate Change policies require the Region to:

- Develop and implement a plan to reduce GHG emissions from Regional operations by at least 20% below 1994 levels, and emissions from the community as a whole by at least 6% below 1994 levels by 2014
- Develop and implement climate change adaptation plans
- Encourage and support energy conservation, district heating and combined heat and power, and alternative and renewable energy sources
- Encourage the Federal and Provincial government and Local Area Municipalities to pursue reductions in air pollutants and GHG emissions and to develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies

Mandatory Provincial Direction

Since the Official Plan policies came into effect, the legislative and policy requirements relating to climate change have evolved considerably. The provincial government released its Climate Change Strategy, 2015, which sets out the Province's vision for combating climate change and achieving its GHG reduction targets. The *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-Carbon Economy Act, 2016* embedded the GHG reduction targets in a statute, prescribed content that must be included in the provincial climate change action plans, and set out the framework for the cap and trade program in Ontario.

Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2016-2020 includes specific commitments for meeting the 2020 GHG reduction targets, including actions to support municipal land use planning for low-carbon communities. As part of the CCAP, the *Planning Act* was amended to identify climate change as a matter of provincial interest and require climate change mitigation and adaptation policies in municipal Official Plans.

The Province also released a new provincial land use planning policy framework – the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe,

2017, Greenbelt Plan, 2017 and Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2017. The policy framework requires municipalities to address climate change in a variety of ways, including:

- Building compact, complete communities
- Assessing infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities
- Reducing automobile dependence and supporting transit and active transportation
- Water conservation
- Stormwater management planning and watershed planning
- Energy conservation in buildings
- Supporting renewable and alternative energy
- Directing development outside of hazardous lands
- Protecting the natural heritage system and agricultural land base
- Supporting integrated waste management

The Growth Plan *encourages* municipalities to develop GHG inventories, interim and long-term emission reduction targets, and strategies to reduce emissions and improve resilience. Niagara Region has already completed this work through its participation in the PCP Program mentioned above (the GHG inventories are based on 2006 data).

In addition, the Growth Plan requires municipalities to develop Official Plan policies and other strategies for certain municipally owned facilities and operations. Examples include:

- Energy conservation in municipally owned facilities
- Air quality improvement through a reduction in emissions from municipal sources

APPENDIX 3: CLIMATE CHANGE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

PDS 7-2018 and PDS 8-2018 presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee on January 31, 2018 provided an overview of the agriculture and natural environment frameworks, and sought direction to consult with the Area Planners Group and local municipal planning staff toward the development of detailed work programs. Individual one-on-one meetings were held with the Local Area Municipalities between February 1 and 21, 2018. Presentations were also made to the Area Planners Group on January 26, March 16, 2018 and April 27, 2018. These meetings and presentations included specific content on climate change to generate early discussion.

During these discussions, climate change was frequently flagged as an important consideration in the development of the agricultural and natural environment work programs, as well as other priority background studies for the Official Plan. Recognizing that climate change impacts many different areas of the Official Plan, it was identified as a significant and important component of the overall initiative.

Input received from the Area Planners Group and the Local Area Municipalities relating to climate change focussed on the following themes:

- The need for clear regional direction on climate change
- The need to engage with other departments (e.g. Public Works, Public Health)
- The importance of education on climate change and drawing policy linkages
- There are a wide range of opportunities in Niagara (e.g. energy conservation in new buildings, GO transit expansion, local transit, stormwater management)
- Integrating climate change policies throughout the new Official Plan may support local conformity exercises and broader implementation

This input provided valuable insight to help shape the climate change work program.

APPENDIX 4: PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION PROGRAM

In 2009, Council endorsed the Region's participation in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program. The program includes five milestones for municipalities to work through to take action on climate change, both corporately and in the community. The five milestones are:

1. Create a GHG emissions inventory and forecast
2. Set an emissions reduction target
3. Develop a local action plan
4. Implement the local action plan or a set of activities
5. Monitor progress and report results

Many municipalities across Canada participated in the PCP Program, including approximately 80 in Ontario. St. Catharines and Welland also joined the PCP Program.

Table 1 – Summary of Niagara Region's Participation in the PCP Program

Milestone	Corporate	Community
1 – Inventory and Forecast	<p>The '2006 Corporate GHG Emissions Inventory' measured emissions by the following sectors: buildings, vehicle fleet, traffic signals and beacons, water and wastewater, and corporate waste</p> <p>The business as usual forecast predicted a 40% total annual emission growth by 2021</p>	<p>The '2006 Community GHG Emissions Inventory' measured emissions in the following sectors: residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, and community waste</p> <p>The business as usual forecast predicted a 20.3% total annual emission growth by 2020</p>
2 – Target	<p>0% growth from the 2006 baseline by 2016</p> <p>10-15% reduction from the 2006 baseline by 2020</p>	<p>6% reduction from the 2006 baseline by 2016</p> <p>10-15% reduction from the 2006 baseline by 2030</p>
3 – Action Plan	<p>'Corporate Climate Change Action Plan' completed in 2013</p> <p>Developed with Corporate Climate Change Steering Committee and informed by paper, Adapting to Climate</p>	<p>'Community Climate Change Action Plan' completed in 2013</p> <p>Developed with Action Team and extensive community consultation over the course of two years; and informed by</p>

Milestone	Corporate	Community
	Change: Challenges for Niagara Region (June 2012)*	paper, Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges for Niagara Region (June 2012)*
4 and 5 – Implementation and Monitoring	Progress report IPC 22-2014 assessed changes in emissions from 2006 to 2012 and concluded that Niagara Region had already surpassed the target set out in the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan, and was on track to reach the long-term GHG reduction goal of 10-15% by 2020	Progress report IPC 22-2014 noted that no data would be collected on the Community Climate Change Action Plan until 2017, as it required access to a number of external data sources

*The action plans were informed by a report that was commissioned to better understand how climate change might impact Niagara. The paper, Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges for Niagara Region, authored by Dr. Jennifer Penney, was released in June 2012. The report describes how climate is changing in the Niagara region, the near-term impacts, climate change activities underway within the region, and gaps that need to be addressed in order to develop and implement adaptation strategies.

Planning and Development Services staff understand that the Corporate Climate Change Steering Committee and the Community Action Team have been dissolved, and the action plans are no longer being actively monitored and reported on.