

Memorandum

Date: December 6, 2021

To: Members of Council

From: Katelyn Tozer, Manager Energy and Environment, Corporate Strategy and Innovation

Subject: Memorandum to Provide Council an Overview of the Official Plan Climate Change Discussion Paper

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an overview of the Climate Change Discussion Paper that provides recommendations on policy direction for the Official Plan Update. This includes an overview of the design process, general direction of the policy recommendations, an overview of the feedback received during the November 23, 2021 Special Council meeting and an outline of next steps.

Council's Climate Change Commitments

Council declared a climate change emergency, and endorsed a target, aligned with global science, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 36% by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The Resilient Caledon Community Climate Change Action Plan was endorsed by Council in April 2021, outlining over 60 actions to support the Town to achieve the necessary emissions reductions and adapt to a changing climate.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report highlights that earth is likely to meet 1.5C warming within the next few decades, which will continue to exacerbate climate impacts and extreme weather. Some changes, such as further ocean warming, and ice retreat are irreversible from centuries to millennia. However, with rapid and sustained reductions in emissions, there is a chance to lower and eventually stabilize the global temperature. The findings of this report highlight the importance of the approach at the core of the Town's strategy, to adapt to extreme weather and facilitate the reduction in community wide greenhouse gas emissions. The success of this strategy is highly dependent on the strength of the policies that are included in the Town's Official Plan update.

Climate Change Discussion Paper

Discussion Paper Development

Energy and Environment Staff worked collaboratively with Strategic Policy Planning staff on the development of the climate change discussion paper, that was based on the direction of the Resilient



Caledon Plan. In addition, staff worked collaboratively with Development Engineering, Stormwater Engineering, Transportation Engineering, Economic Development staff, to receive feedback on the proposed policy direction. In addition, external agencies including the Conservation Authorities and the Region of Peel staff were consulted on the proposed policy direction. A high-level summary of the process in developing the Discussion Paper is outlined below:

Phase	Outcomes
<u>Legislation Overview:</u> This phase of work produced a comprehensive assessment of the Provincial and Federal policies, plans and frameworks, related to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a strong understanding of the policy framework that provided direction to the Town to incorporate climate change policies into the Official Plan. • Outlined gaps between the Town’s existing Official Plan Policies and the legislative context.
<u>Development of Climate Change Policy Options:</u> This phase included a detailed best practice scan of climate change policies in other municipal Official Plans, research institutions and relevant Town plans and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice scan of policy options focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to changing climate conditions. • Proposed overview of how to group the various policies into common themes in the final discussion paper.
<u>Draft Climate Change Policies Development:</u> Draft policy recommendations for the Official Plan Update that align with the Town’s climate change goals, and context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive summary of proposed draft policy options recommended for the Official Plan Update. • An outline of the implementation tools and strategies that can be used to support the proposed policy direction.

Proposed Policy Direction

The proposed Climate Change Discussion paper (attached as Schedule A to this Memorandum), has four key purposes:

- Provide an overview of the Town’s 2016 baseline emissions forecast (used in the Resilient Caledon Plan);
- Provide an overview of the climate projections, potential risks and vulnerabilities resulting from changing climate patterns and extreme weather;
- Review international, Federal, Provincial and Regional direction on climate change policy, and
- Present policy options, recommendations and implementation tools to strengthen alignment with the Town’s climate change objectives and commitments.

The proposed policy recommendations for strengthening the incorporation of climate change into the Official Plan Update are organized into five theme areas. Each of the theme area is outlined below and include a high level justification statement and description of the proposed policy recommendations:

Theme Area One: Climate Change

Council declared a climate change emergency and adopted aggressive greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets. The success of achieving these targets depend on the ability to ensure that climate change is an underlying theme of the Official Plan Update. Policy Recommendations include:

- **Establish a climate change section:** Establish clear climate change mitigation and adaptation goals, strategic direction and principles.
- **Integrate Resilient Caledon:** Include greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets, future climate impacts, key actions and implementation and monitoring requirements.
- **Introduce Strong Climate Change Policies:** This includes integrating climate change considerations throughout key theme areas in the Official Plan, including stronger policy language (e.g. shall versus encourage), a strong understanding of policy direction impacts related to climate change, an understanding of co benefits and interrelated Town wide strategies, and establishing implementation timelines and reporting metrics.
- **Emergency Management:** Incorporate climate change risk into emergency management plans, including updated climate projections, and collaborate with partners to share information and enhance emergency preparedness.

Theme Area Two: Transportation, Technology and Infrastructure

Transportation and building energy use account for the largest proportion of local greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, core municipal infrastructure, including roads, bridges and stormwater networks have been identified to be at risk of forecasted climate impacts related to extreme weather, specifically intense precipitation. Key policy recommendations include:

- **Transportation:** Reduce transportation emissions by enhancing active transportation, transit, electric vehicle and carpooling infrastructure and introduce complete street design principles.
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Infrastructure:** Require net zero energy and emissions plans, encourage district energy and renewable energy in new development, increase density of neighbourhoods to improve the business case of low carbon energy systems, increase uptake of rooftop solar in existing and new buildings, and support technology innovation such as energy storage.
- **Infrastructure:** Apply a climate change lens to design standards, stormwater master plans, and asset management. Direct development away from high risk areas (e.g. flooding) and enhance stormwater management through adopting innovative techniques such as low impact development.

Theme Area Three: Natural Resources and Agriculture

Caledon has an extensive natural heritage and agriculture system that faces significant risk from climate change, related to the spread of invasive species and pests, drier summer conditions leading to challenges with managing crops and loss of ecosystem services, and more intense rainfall leading to stormwater management challenges. In addition, development is a risk to these systems related to loss of species habitat, food security and carbon sequestration. Policies to enhance and protect natural resources and agriculture include:

- **Natural Heritage:** Enhance and protect the Town's natural heritage system, restrict development adjacent to natural heritage features, improve coordination amongst public agencies (e.g. conservation authorities), enhance tree canopy by developing a forest strategy and exploring a tree protection by law and implement monitoring programs to track success.

- **Agriculture:** Support the long-term stability of the agricultural sector and protect the agricultural economy by enhancing local food production (e.g. community gardens), processing and distribution, and promote diversification and innovation (e.g. indoor and outdoor crop production). Policies also include incentivizing farming practices that mitigate climate change impacts (e.g. renewable energy) and enhance the quality of soils and develop partnerships to identify climate risks and solutions.
- **Mineral Resources:** Policy direction includes additional studies on the impacts of aggregate extraction on communities and the environment, rehabilitation of abandoned extraction sites, promote the reuse and recovery of aggregate material and reduce operational emissions (i.e. mostly through transportation). This Policy direction is provided by the Region's Aggregate Resource Policy Review process.

Theme Area Four: Growth, Settlement, Housing and Employment

The Town's population is expected to more than double over the planning horizon of the Official Plan Update. This will result in the need to expand critical infrastructure and services to accommodate growth, while not jeopardizing the ability of the Town to meet its climate change targets. Key policy recommendations include:

- **Stormwater Management and Flooding:** Introduce incentives for the maintenance and operation of stormwater infrastructure, and consider natural hazards as part of the development approvals process.
- **Infill and Density:** Stronger policies that promote mix use, compact development (e.g. more dense development and intensity within the built area) with a comprehensive active and transit transportation network, and proximity to high quality jobs.
- **Low Carbon Development:** Strongly encourage carbon neutral developments and resilient design for all new residential and employment lands. This includes establishing innovation districts and enacting ecozone and green roof by laws.
- **Green Infrastructure:** Expand and enhance the parkland system, incorporate green infrastructure in the management of stormwater and collaborate with Conservation Authorities to protect and enhance the natural system.

Theme Area Five: Tourism, Heritage, Healthy Communities and Culture

Caledon's tourism industry will face many of the same climate risks, as outlined in the Natural Resources and Agriculture Sector (theme area three). In addition, human health will be at risk related to vector borne disease, and health ailments related to extreme heat and poor air quality. Policy recommendations to help manage this include:

- **Enhanced Human Health:** Introduce policies that recognize the connection between human health, land use and infrastructure decisions, ensure equitable access to the natural heritage system and require new developments to undertake health assessments that recognize the climate change risks to human health, and develop remediation plans.
- **Protect Tourism and Heritage:** Introduce policies that recognize risks to Tourism and cultural heritage resources, from climate change and develop mitigation strategies.

Council Workshop

On November 23, 2021 a Special Council Meeting was held to receive feedback on the proposed direction of the Climate Change Discussion Paper organized into four key focus areas. A summary of the feedback provided from Council is highlighted below:

- **Built Form:** There was positive feedback regarding the Town striving for density in the right areas and design new communities using the “*15 minute neighbourhood*” concept, where residents can work, play and live within a close proximity. Higher density should also be complemented by increased access to community greenspace. However, staff should work to clearly define what density means in Caledon and communicate this to residents through Official Plan engagement opportunities. There was also general agreement that there should be strong policies in the plan for renewable energy technologies and carbon neutral new development.
- **Transportation:** There was strong interest in expanding the Town’s transit system and including connections to the more rural areas of Caledon as well as the future GO station. There was also a desire to ensure our transportation networks are future ready for low carbon technologies and incorporate complete street policies to enhance the Town’s active transportation network.
- **Natural Environment and Agricultural Systems:** A strong principle in development moving forward should be ensuring access to green corridors that connect the community to broader natural systems. It was also noted that the policies in the plan should be flexible to account for changes in the agricultural industry, such as smaller farming practices and enhancing community gardens in urban areas. Lastly, there was general agreement that aggregate policies in the updated Official Plan should encourage the use of recycled aggregate.
- **Resilient Communities:** There was general support for expanding natural infrastructure and low impact development as part of the Town’s stormwater management practices. In addition, Council wanted to see policies encourage climate change best practices into the design of future business lands.

Next Steps

The Climate Change Discussion Paper (Schedule A) will be posted on the “[Have Your Say Caledon](#)” webpage under the “Future Caledon” webpage, open to receive stakeholder comment. The discussion paper, in addition to the comments received from Council during the November 23rd Special Council Meeting will be provided to the Policy and Planning team to formulate policies in the Official Plan Update.

In addition, staff have produced a reader friendly version of the discussion paper (Schedule B), to ensure broad understanding amongst the public of the direction and need to change our traditional planning approaches to ensure alignment with the Town’s climate change goals. This document is currently being designed by a graphic artist and will be posted on the “*Have Your Say Caledon*” website and promoted online.

Attachments

Schedule A: Climate Change Discussion Paper Technical Report

Schedule B: Public Friendly Version “Caledon’s Official Plan Update and Climate Change”