

## Staff Report

---

**Report To:** Operations Committee

**Report From:** Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness

**Meeting Date:** July 20, 2023

**Report Code:** CM-23-011

**Subject:** Climate Action Strategy including the Climate Mitigation Plan

---

### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-23-011 respecting the Climate Action Strategy, including the Climate Mitigation Plan, the Operations Committee recommends that City Council approves the Climate Action Strategy, which incorporates the Climate Mitigation Plan.

### Highlights:

- The climate mitigation plan is a vital component of the City's Climate Action Strategy
- The City's climate mitigation plan aligns with the Grey County climate action plan.
- The City must take action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate

### Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Green City - KR5 - Develop a climate mitigation plan as part of a Climate Action Strategy that incorporates the 2021 corporate climate change adaptation plan

## **Climate and Environmental Implications:**

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

## **Previous Report/Authority:**

[CM-23-007 Draft Climate Mitigation Plan](#)

[CM-23-001 Climate Action Strategy – Inventory and Proposed Targets](#)

[CM-22-012 Climate Action Strategy – Proposed Timeline and Deliverables](#)

[CR-21-011 Draft Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan](#)

[Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan with Appendix](#)

[OP-22-005 Partners for Climate Protection](#)

[Going Green in Grey - Presentation of Grey County Climate Action Plan](#)

## **Background:**

In April 2021, Council approved the City's initial corporate climate change adaptation plan and the City's Strategic Plan, which included the Council priority of "Green City." One of the measures of success was developing a climate action strategy that included the development of a climate mitigation plan and incorporating the 2021 corporate climate change adaptation plan.

Mitigation is an essential response to climate change. It complements adaptation efforts and focuses on reducing the amount of energy used, improving energy efficiency, and switching the sources of remaining energy to clean energy.

For the past 18 months, City staff and the Climate Action Team Owen Sound (CATOS) have collaborated to develop a climate mitigation plan as part of the over-arching climate action strategy. This work builds on Grey County's climate action plan to ensure a collaborative effort.

## **Analysis:**

The climate mitigation plan that has been developed is grounded in best practices and developed through significant research and data gathering.

The development of the climate mitigation plan has been a truly collaborative effort involving staff from across the organization and engaging the community to ensure the corporate actions identified resonated with citizens. This team collaborated in developing the climate mitigation plan and overarching climate action strategy.

It has always been the City's intent to utilize the Grey County Going Green in Grey plan for the community actions as climate change has no boundaries. The climate mitigation plan supports these community actions and identifies potential supporting City divisions which will be coordinating with the County related to the implementation. For the corporate actions, staff identified potential actions, which were then provided to the community to assess whether or not the planned actions resonated with citizens or whether there were additional corporate actions that should be included.

### **Gathering Feedback on the Draft Climate Mitigation Plan**

Staff had a booth at the Earth Day celebration on April 22, where the community could ask questions and provide feedback. Staff also presented at a public information session on May 17 hosted by the Climate Action Team Owen Sound (CATOS) as part of the ongoing collaboration between the City and CATOS on this initiative. The draft plan was also posted with a survey on the City's public engagement portal, "Our City," and was open between April 20 to May 28 and resulted in 60 responses.

### **Feedback Received on the Draft Climate Mitigation Plan**

From the survey results, it was clear that there is an opportunity to increase education on the difference between community and corporate actions and to increase awareness of the Grey County Going Green in Grey plan (40% were unaware or had little awareness). This feedback has been forwarded to Grey County as they develop their implementation plan for community action and will be utilized by the City as we plan future communications related to corporate actions.

While reviewing the survey responses, it was apparent that there are polarizing views regarding what actions the City should be taking that range from the City should not be taking any action to mitigate climate change to the City should be doing more. All survey responses are included as an appendix to this report in Attachment 2. The responses that spoke directly to amending a proposed corporate action or adding a corporate action that hadn't been identified were reviewed by the project team and CATOS and

incorporated where feasible based on relative GHG reduction potential, cost and staffing resources required to implement and level of City influence.

### **Financial Implications:**

Any required costs to complete the actions within the climate action strategy (for both the climate mitigation plan and the corporate climate change adaptation plan) will be contemplated through the City's normal budget planning processes and will be presented to Council as recommendations in future capital and operating budgets for Council consideration.

### **Communication Strategy:**

This report is communicated by posting Committee meeting agendas on the City of Owen Sound website. An action identified within the climate mitigation plan is to develop and implement a communications plan to highlight activities undertaken and share success stories related to the climate action strategy once approved.

### **Consultation:**

Staff from across the organization provided input into the actions through in-person working groups and an internal survey. Community feedback was gathered through an online survey and at two in-person events. The cross-functional project team included City staff (Manager of Corporate Services-Bradey Carbert, Geomatics Specialist Kurtis Boyce, Fire Prevention Officer-Greg Nicol, Climate Contract position-Maggie Murakami) and members of the Climate Action Team Owen Sound (Mary Anne Alton, Joachim Ostertag, Elizabeth Zetlin, and John Anderson) all of whom were consulted in the development of the strategy and this report.

### **Attachments:**

1. Climate Action Strategy
  - a. Climate Mitigation Plan
  - b. Status of Actions from the Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan – February 2023
  - c. [Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan with Appendix](#)
2. Survey Results – Draft Climate Mitigation Plan
3. Public Health Comments - Owen Sound Climate Mitigation Plan

**Recommended and Submitted by:**

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Michelle Palmer, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness, at [mpalmer@owensound.ca](mailto:mpalmer@owensound.ca) or 519-376-4440 ext. 1246.