



## REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**REPORT FROM:** Damian Szybalski, Manager of Sustainability

**DATE:** March 19, 2014

**REPORT NO.:** PDS-2014-0011

**RE:** Sustainability Implications Worksheet Update: Action #11  
Community Sustainability Strategy – Implementation  
File No.: D27-IN

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Report No. PDS-2014-0011 (dated March 19, 2014) regarding the Sustainability Implications Worksheet update be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the updated (i) Introduction to Sustainability Implications Worksheet (Appendix 1); (ii) Sustainability Implications Worksheet (Appendix 2); and (iii) staff report template (Appendix 3), be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT Town staff be directed to use the updated Sustainability Implications Worksheet for applicable reports as of the June 23, 2014 Council meeting cycle;

AND FURTHER THAT relevant aspects of the Sustainability Implications Worksheet be taken into account for future budget submissions, and reviews of the Town's asset management and budgeting processes, as appropriate;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report and associated Council resolution be forwarded electronically to Halton Region, City of Burlington, the Towns of Milton and Oakville, and the GTA-Clean Air Council for their information.

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of an updated and practical Sustainability Implications Worksheet. The Worksheet's update is one of 18 priority

actions of the Implementation Action Plan for the Community Sustainability Strategy. It updates the Town's existing award-winning Sustainability Implications Worksheet.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Through the recommendations of Report No. PDS-2013-0047 (dated June 5, 2013), Council approved a Practical Implementation Action Plan for the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy: <http://haltonhills.ca/calendars/2013/PDS-2013-0047.pdf>

The Implementation Action Plan consists of 18 priority actions. Action #11 pertained to the development of a mechanism that will ensure that all future Town plans, studies and actions align with the direction established in the Community Sustainability Strategy, and encourage community partners to do the same. This report addresses this action item in a significant way through the update of the Sustainability Implications Worksheet and associated materials. Additional recommendations related to Action #11 will be brought forward at a later date.

## **COMMENTS:**

### **1.1 Context**

The Town has repeatedly taken practical actions demonstrating its leadership on sustainability and quality of life matters. One example of this dates back to 2008 when, championing Green Plan implementation, the Town amended its staff report template to include a new "Environmental Impacts" section. Used for about three years, the "Environmental Impacts" section provided Council with information on the potential environmental impacts of staff recommendations.

Subsequently, in 2011, the Town updated its report template by replacing "Environmental Impacts" with a "Sustainability Implications" section. This was accompanied by the introduction of a "Sustainability Implications Worksheet" which assisted Town staff in completing the required information. Since its approval, Council and Town staff have received training, information and ongoing assistance in the use of the Sustainability Implications Worksheet.

The "Sustainability Implications" section of staff reports has provided Council, Town staff and the public with a more fulsome analysis of staff recommendations as they relate to quality of life in Halton Hills – covering Halton Hills' economic, environmental, cultural and social well-being.

### **1.2 Halton Hills as a Leader**

Halton Hills was a leader in adopting a "Sustainability Implications" section and a "Sustainability Implications Worksheet". Since that time, a growing number of municipalities has followed suit or is exploring the use of similar decision-making tools.

Halton Hills' approach is a best practice. In fact, for amending its staff report template with "Sustainability Implications" and approving the "Sustainability Implications Worksheet", the Town has been recognized by the:

- Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators with the prestigious National Environment Award for its innovation and administrative excellence; and
- Credit Valley Conservation with the "Friends of the Credit Conservation Award" – Certificate of Merit.

Town staff has also made a presentation on the "Sustainability Implications" tool to the GTA-Clean Air Council which consists of GTA municipalities.

### **1.3 Update Objectives**

The objectives of the update included:

- Ease of use and streamlined design;
- Alignment with the Community Sustainability Strategy;
- Ability to easily showcase/highlight departmental initiatives;
- Providing concise, relevant and meaningful information to the reader;
- Building on a tool that is familiar to Council, Town staff and the public; and
- Continuing to demonstrate innovation and administrative excellence.

As per the recommendations of this report, relevant aspects of the Sustainability Implications Worksheet will be taken into account as part of future reviews of the Town's asset management and budgeting processes. This will ensure alignment with the Town's Strategic Plan and the application of a consistent approach to its investment decisions.

### **1.4 Key Updates**

Updates to the Sustainability Implications Worksheet consist of three parts:

- One-page introduction with an overview of the Worksheet – see Appendix 1
- Two-page Sustainability Implications Worksheet – see Appendix 2
- An insert for the staff report template – see Appendix 3

The updated Worksheet is a practical and easy to use tool. With practice, for typical reports, it should only take about ten minutes to complete. There are five steps to assessing and effectively communicating sustainability implications:

- Browse the Community Sustainability Strategy.
- Contact the Planning, Development & Sustainability Department with any questions.
- Complete the Worksheet's five simple steps.
- Summarize findings in the Sustainability Implications section of staff reports.
- Keep a copy of the completed Worksheet.

Key updates are summarized in Table 1, below.

**Table 1: Summary of Proposed Updates**

| Item                                 | Current Practice  | Proposed Updates   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Introduction<br>(see Appendix 1)     | The current Worksheet includes a brief overview of how it is to be used.  | A standalone one-page introduction has been prepared. It provides staff with an overview of the Worksheet’s purpose and straightforward instructions for how it should be completed.   |
| Worksheet design<br>(see Appendix 2) | The Worksheet asks strategic questions to prompt the reader to assess the sustainability and quality of life implications of their recommendations.   | <p>The Worksheet has been updated to align with the Community Sustainability Strategy.</p> <p>With ease of use being a key objective, the updated Worksheet will be made available in a fillable electronic format so that it can be completed by simply checking applicable boxes. Brief commentary can be provided in the staff report under “Sustainability Implications”. This section can also be used to highlight relationships to many other Town plans and policies.</p> <p>The Worksheet poses five strategic questions to assist staff in establishing a relationship between recommended actions and the Community Sustainability Strategy. These questions address cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and the social well-being of Halton Hills or quality of life. An assessment of the benefits of any financial investment is also required.</p>   |
| Evaluation<br>(see Appendix 2)       | There is no evaluation assigned to the recommendations. This can make it difficult for the reader to easily determine how ‘good’ the recommendations are in advancing sustainability and quality of life. | <p>Town staff would rate the level of alignment of their proposed action(s) with the Community Sustainability Strategy by selecting one of four options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Excellent</u>: Your action(s) supports all four pillars of sustainability, advances at least one goal and/or theme from each of the four pillars, and supports at least one other existing sustainability-related Town plan, policy, procedure or initiative.</li> <li>▪ <u>Very Good</u>: Action(s) supports three of the four pillars of sustainability and at least one goal and/or theme from each of these pillars. Other Town plans, policies, procedures and/or initiatives may also be supported.</li> <li>▪ <u>Good</u>: Action(s) supports one to two of the four pillars of sustainability and at least one goal and/or theme from each of these pillars. Other Town plans, policies, procedures and/or initiatives may also be</li> </ul> |

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|  |  | <p>supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Fair</u>: Your action(s) supports at least one existing sustainability-related Town plan, policy, procedure or initiative, but does not have a direct relationship to the Community Sustainability Strategy.</li> </ul> <p>Actions towards the “Excellent” end of the scale will tend to be more inter-disciplinary, comprehensive and support more of the pillars of sustainability. Those toward the “Fair” end will also support sustainability, but will tend to be more scoped and support fewer pillars. Sustainability is maximized at the intersection of cultural, economic, environmental and social objectives.</p> <p>If “Fair” is selected, Town staff may wish to reconsider their action(s) and explore alternatives.</p>   |
| <p>Summary of Sustainability Implications<br/> <i>(see Appendix 3)</i></p> | <p>Town staff complete the Sustainability Implications Worksheet. Next, their work is summarized in the staff report under the Sustainability Implications section without a pre-defined structure/template.</p> | <p>Town staff complete the Sustainability Implications Worksheet. Next, their work is easily summarized in the staff report under the Sustainability Implications section using a predefined structure/template that enables staff to quickly and easily check relevant boxes, and provide brief commentary. This setup makes it easy for Town staff to summarize relevant information in a quick, concise and consistent manner. It also makes it easy for the reader to understand the outcomes.</p>   |
| <p>Applicable reports</p>  | <p>Currently ‘substantial’ reports on major projects, policies and initiatives are required to complete the Sustainability Implications Worksheet.</p>   | <p>The updated Worksheet will continue to be used for substantial reports, major projects, studies, policies and initiatives that are most relevant to the Town’s economic, cultural, environmental and/or social well-being, and quality of life. Routine reports pertaining to administrative, litigation, mandatory (legislated) reporting, personnel and day-to-day operational matters, as well as basic information reports, minor awards of tender and minor planning applications are not required to complete the Worksheet, unless determined otherwise by the Director.</p> <p>The sustainability implications of minor awards of tender should be considered as part of the annual operating and capital budgeting process, <i>without</i> the need to complete the Worksheet. Major awards of tender will be evaluated as part of the annual operating and capital budgeting process, and complete the Worksheet.</p> |

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|  |  | <p>Reports in the 'Not Applicable' categories will be marked as "N/A" in the staff report, accompanied by a brief explanation so that the reader is aware of the rationale behind the use of "N/A".</p> <p>This approach will produce meaningful commentary. It will also make the most effective use of resources while capturing key reports that have sustainability implications. The Office of Sustainability will continue to be a resource to assist staff in the completion of the updated Worksheet.</p> |
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## **1.5 Next Steps**

Key next steps are:

- Implement necessary updates to the staff report template;
- Provide Council and staff training/information opportunities (as necessary) and/or develop electronic information tools for the Town's Intranet/HUB; and
- Continue to foster awareness of the Community Sustainability Strategy.

The Office of Sustainability is committed to continuing to provide staff with on-going support in the completion of the Sustainability Implications section of staff reports.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Sustainability is at the core of the Town's Strategic Plan and is one of Council's top ten priorities. Therefore, by approving the updated Sustainability Implications Worksheet, Council will support the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct financial impact associated with this report.

### **COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:**

If the recommendations of this report are approved, the Planning, Development and Sustainability Department will offer information sessions for Council and Town staff (as necessary). Alternatively, one-on-one meetings can be arranged. Resources permitting, a video tutorial on the Worksheet's effective completion may also be developed. The Planning, Development and Sustainability Department is ready to continue to provide staff with advice and support in completing the Sustainability Implications Worksheet.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The contents of this report were reviewed against relevant sections of the Sustainability Implications Worksheet. Key conclusions are summarized below.

The use of the updated Sustainability Implications Worksheet will facilitate implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy. This will lead to cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and social well-being. Ultimately, quality of life will be elevated.

Importantly, given the broad nature of the Community Sustainability Strategy, its implementation will also benefit many other Town plans and initiatives, including the Strategic Plan, Official Plan, Cycling Master Plan, Youth Needs Study, Economic Development Strategy and Green Plan.

**CONSULTATION:**

Consultation took place with the Staff Sustainability Team, Senior Management Team, Manager of Corporate Communications, Town Clerk, Manager of Purchasing and the Manager of Accounting.

**CONCLUSION:**

This report seeks Council approval of an updated and easy to use Sustainability Implications Worksheet. The Worksheet is one of 18 priority actions of the Implementation Action Plan for the Community Sustainability Strategy. The recommendations of this report largely addressed Action #11 of the Implementation Action Plan.

Approval of the updated Sustainability Implications Worksheet will enable the Town to continue to demonstrate innovation and administration excellence.

Respectfully submitted,

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Damian Szybalski, M.Sc.PI, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Sustainability

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John Linhardt, M.PI., MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning, Development  
and Sustainability

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David Smith  
Chief Administrative Officer

## APPENDIX 1 to Report No. PDS-2014-0011 -Introduction to Sustainability Implications Worksheet-



Part 1 of 3

### Introduction: Sustainability Implications Worksheet

The Town of Halton Hills is committed to taking practical local actions that lead to a higher quality of life. Sustainability objectives are part of many Town initiatives, including its Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Official Plan, Cultural Master Plan, Green Plan and Community Sustainability Strategy. The Town is a partner in the Strategy's implementation, where our joint Vision to 2060 is:

*"In 2060, the urban and rural communities of Halton Hills balance economic prosperity with a deep commitment to the natural environment, while retaining viable local agriculture and small-town feel, and being socially equitable, culturally vibrant and strongly connected."*

Achieving this Vision is a joint responsibility that requires decisions to support the Community Sustainability Strategy. Five strategic questions are posed through the Worksheet that will assist you in establishing a relationship between your actions and the Strategy. An "action" can be a new policy, procedure or plan. It can be a new equipment purchase or facility expansion. It can be a planning recommendation, Terms of Reference for your project, a Town event or many other types of action.

The Community Sustainability Strategy positions the Town as a sustainability leader. It helps integrate sustainability into the Town's decision making, plans, policies and other initiatives. The Strategy is divided into four 'pillars of sustainability': (i) Cultural Vibrancy; (ii) Economic Prosperity; (iii) Environmental Health and (iv) Social Well-Being. It has 167 goals.

The Worksheet is a practical tool designed to help you. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. These five steps can help:

1. Browse the Community Sustainability Strategy.
2. Contact the Office of Sustainability with any questions.
3. Complete the Worksheet (five simple steps – see the Worksheet).
4. Briefly summarize your findings in the "Sustainability Implications" section of your report.
5. Keep a copy of the completed Worksheet for your records.

#### Resources:

- Community Sustainability Strategy: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/Sustainability-Strategy.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/Sustainability-Strategy.php)
- Green Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/greenplan.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/greenplan.php)
- Strategic Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/strat-plan.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/strat-plan.php)
- Youth Needs Study: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/YouthStudy.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/YouthStudy.php)
- Cultural Master Plan: <http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives>
- Mayor's Community Energy Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/CommunityEnergyPlan.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/CommunityEnergyPlan.php)
- Green Building Standard: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/GreenBuildingStudy.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/GreenBuildingStudy.php)
- Cycling Master Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/cyclingMP.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/cyclingMP.php)
- Economic Development Strategy: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/EconomicDevelopmentMP.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/EconomicDevelopmentMP.php)
- Pedestrian Charter: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/PedestrianCharter.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/PedestrianCharter.php)
- Official Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/officialplan/index.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/officialplan/index.php)
- Transportation Master Plan: [www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/tmp.php](http://www.haltonhills.ca/initiatives/tmp.php)

Questions? Contact the Office of Sustainability ■ [sustainability@haltonhills.ca](mailto:sustainability@haltonhills.ca) ■ 905.873.2601 ext. 2289

1

**APPENDIX 2 to Report No. PDS-2014-0011  
 -Sustainability Implications Worksheet-**



Part 2 of 3



**Worksheet: Sustainability Implications**

Please complete this Worksheet in the early stages of your project. Follow these five simple steps:

**Step 1:** How does your recommended action(s) support the Vision of the Community Sustainability Strategy? (If you find it easier, you may wish to complete Steps 2 to 5 first, and then return to Step 1)

**Step 2:** Which pillar(s) of sustainability does your recommended action(s) support? Which Themes and Goals are being supported? Check all that apply.

- Cultural Vibrancy → If yes, check applicable Themes below.
- Economic Prosperity → If yes, check applicable Themes below.
- Environmental Health → If yes, check applicable Themes below.
- Social Well-Being → If yes, check applicable Themes below.

|  |  |
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| <b>CULTURAL VIBRANCY</b>   | <b>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strong Sense of Community<br><input type="checkbox"/> Highly Engaged Citizens<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive to Youth<br><input type="checkbox"/> Vital Arts & Culture Sectors<br><input type="checkbox"/> Inviting Parks and Trails<br><input type="checkbox"/> Diverse Recreation & Sports<br><input type="checkbox"/> Valued Heritage Legacy<br><input type="checkbox"/> Leading Edge Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversified & Resilient Economy<br><input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant Food & Agricultural Sector<br><input type="checkbox"/> Tourism<br><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced Tax Base<br><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge-Based Industry, Research, Innovation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Active & Vibrant Creative Sector<br><input type="checkbox"/> Live-Work Opportunities<br><input type="checkbox"/> Green Economy<br><input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure |
| <b>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</b>  | <b>SOCIAL WELL-BEING</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage<br><input type="checkbox"/> Water<br><input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions<br><input type="checkbox"/> Land Use<br><input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity<br><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Consumption & Waste Generation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Energy   | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Seniors<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social and Health Services<br><input type="checkbox"/> Poverty<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comfort, Safety and Inclusion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Learning  |

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**Step 3: Does this action represent a good financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Financial decisions sometimes favour purchasing products and services with the lowest initial purchase price. However, a product that may have a lower initial purchase price may have a higher cost over its lifetime due to higher operating and maintenance costs. In recommending your action(s), did you consider:**

- |   |                              |                             |                              |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Initial purchase price, alternative approach or best practice   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Long-term operating/maintenance costs                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Disposal costs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Payback period  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Availability of incentives                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |
| Overall, does this action represent a good financial investment | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A |

**Step 4: Measuring progress helps achieve success. How have or will you measure the success of your proposed action(s)?**

**Step 5: Overall, how would you rate the alignment of your proposed action(s) with the Community Sustainability Strategy?**

| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent   | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Good  | <input type="checkbox"/> Good  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  |
|--|---|--|--|
| Your action(s) supports all four pillars of sustainability, advances at least one goal and/or theme from each of the four pillars, and supports at least one other existing sustainability-related Town plan, policy, procedure or initiative. | Your action(s) supports three of the four pillars of sustainability and at least one goal and/or theme from each of these pillars. Other Town plans, policies, procedures and/or initiatives may also be supported. | Your action(s) supports one to two of the four pillars of sustainability and at least one goal and/or theme from each of these pillars. Other Town plans, policies, procedures and/or initiatives may also be supported. | Your action(s) supports at least one existing sustainability-related Town plan, policy, procedure or initiative, but does not have a direct relationship to the Community Sustainability Strategy. |

- If you selected "Fair", you may want to reconsider your action(s) and explore alternatives.
- If the proposed action may hinder the Strategy's implementation, describe the actions which you have taken to minimize such impacts. For example, did you: (i) select different supplies; (ii) changed the project process; (iii) completed additional analysis; (iv) purchased a more efficient vehicle; (v) other?
- The "N/A" option should only be used in rare circumstances. For example, for reports that are not required to complete the Worksheet. See report PDS-2014-0011 for applicable report types. If you select "N/A", please explain why in the staff report section.

Questions? Contact the Office of Sustainability ■ [sustainability@haltonhills.ca](mailto:sustainability@haltonhills.ca) ■ 905.873.2601 ext. 2289

**APPENDIX 3 to Report No. PDS-2014-0011**  
***-Staff Report Template-***

Part 3 of 3

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life. The relationship between this report and the Strategy is summarized below:

Do the report's recommendations advance the Strategy's implementation?

Yes  No  N/A

Which pillar(s) of sustainability does this report support?

Cultural Vibrancy  Economic Prosperity  N/A

Environmental Health  Social Well-Being

Briefly summarize the results of your Sustainability Implications Worksheet.  
If you have selected "N/A", please briefly explain why. ←[Delete this wording upon completing this section]

Overall, the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is:

Excellent  Very Good  Good  Fair  N/A