



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Damian Szybalski, Corporate Planning Project Lead and Manager of Sustainability

DATE: March 27, 2015

REPORT NO.: PDS-2015-0019

RE: Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015
File No.: D27-CC

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PDS-2015-0019, dated March 27, 2015 regarding the Town's comments on "Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015", be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the comments contained in Appendix 1 to Report No. PDS-2015-0019 be approved as the Town's comments on "Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015";

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the GTA-Clean Air Council.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of "Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015" released by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. It is also to outline comments that were forwarded to the Ministry. To meet Provincial commenting period deadlines, the latter comments were forwarded from staff and indicate that they are subject to Council approval. Lastly, it is to obtain Council's approval of Town comments.

BACKGROUND:

In February 2015, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change released the “Ontario’s Climate Change Discussion Paper – 2015”. The Discussion Paper is available at: www.ontario.ca/climatechange

The Discussion Paper outlines matters that the Province will consider in developing a long-term climate change strategy and an accompanying 5-year action plan. The Strategy is to be released later in 2015 and will be designed to achieve the Province’s greenhouse gas reduction targets. The targets include an 80 per cent greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2050 and carbon neutrality by the end of the century.

The Discussion Paper notes that “climate change is the critical issue of our time.” Via the Paper, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has engaged Ontarians in a conversation around climate change, with a long-term vision for a low-carbon economy defined as one “...that pollutes less, wastes less and makes more efficient and productive use of energy, water and resources.” Feedback on the Discussion Paper will inform Ontario’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Among other things, the Discussion Paper:

- Recognizes that climate change is occurring and that resulting severe weather events (e.g. ice storms, flooding) are having adverse socio-economic impacts on Ontario communities.
- Emphasizes that action is needed now.
- Emphasizes the need to move to a low-carbon economy that uses less fossil fuels and supports innovation.
- Outlines goals and objectives for achieving Ontario’s climate change vision. This will require significant transformation, including major changes in how communities are build, how energy is produced and used, and how people and goods move. One of the mechanisms proposed to be used to create a low carbon economy is carbon pricing. Various options are put forward that would place a dollar value on greenhouse gas emissions. Assigning a dollar value to emissions is intended to drive investment in technologies that reduce emissions, and shift economic activity away from fossil fuels.
- Outlines ten guiding principles for achieving a low-carbon economy. The vision is for Ontario to:
 - Be a leader in climate change mitigation and science.
 - Build a strong carbon neutral economy, communities, infrastructure and energy.
 - Leave a legacy of a healthy world for our children and future generations.
 - Protect ecosystems, including air, land and water.

- Outlines actions and policy changes that are critical to meeting Ontario's short-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and include climate change considerations in government decisions. Possible actions include placing a price on carbon emissions; improving efficiency in key sectors (e.g. transportation, buildings, electricity), supporting science, research and technology; and promoting climate resiliency and risk management.
- Poses several questions that will help shape the Strategy. These questions relate to the knowledge of First Nations and Metis communities; actions by key sectors (e.g. transportation, agriculture, industry, government); barriers to broader electric vehicle use; communities and built form (e.g. stabilizing transportation and building emissions, building net zero communities, renewable energy, efficient building operation, energy efficiency of existing building stock, climate change vulnerability and risk assessment); approaches to putting a price on carbon emissions; and technological approaches to creating a low-carbon economy.

COMMENTS:

A June 2012 report prepared for the Insurance Bureau of Canada by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, estimated the financial impacts (i.e. insured losses) caused by severe weather to have ranged from \$10 to \$50 billion globally each year over the past decade. In 2011, these costs reached \$100 billion. In Canada alone, between 2009 and 2011, losses reached about \$3.6 billion.¹

Although occurring globally, climate change impacts are felt locally at the municipal level. Local governments are strategically positioned to make a significant contribution to addressing climate change, and reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. This is because local governments have the ability to work closely with community stakeholders, and to act quickly to implement effective measures.

Generally speaking, the objectives outlined in the Discussion Paper align well with many of the actions already being taken by the Town, positioning Halton Hills to make a meaningful contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation. These actions include:

- The Town is a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Partners for Climate Protection Program (PCP), consisting of about 270 municipalities committed to taking action on climate change.

¹ Telling the Weather Story. June 2012. Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction. Prepared for the Insurance Bureau of Canada. Accessed June 11, 2014. Available at: www.ibc.ca/en/Natural_Disasters/documents/McBean_Report.pdf

- The Town is a member of the GTA-Clean Air Council, a network of 26 GTA municipalities working collaboratively on actions that will improve air quality, and facilitate climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- The Town has and continues to implement key actions that will help mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, including its:
 - Community Sustainability Strategy
 - Mayor's Community Energy Plan
 - Green Development Standards
 - Corporate Sustainable Building Strategy
 - Transportation Master Plan
 - Cycling Master Plan
 - Construction of LEED® and highly efficient facilities
 - Use of Low Impact Development techniques
- Recognizing the importance of climate change impacts on Halton Hills, in the Fall of 2013, the Town's Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) delivered a report titled "Preparing for Change in Our Climate". This report responded to the Mayor's request of TEAC to explore adaptation options that would prepare Halton Hills for climate change. TEAC consulted with community advisors, climate change adaptation experts, and staff leaders from the Town, Halton Region, Conservation Authorities, school boards and Halton Hills Hydro. TEAC's work also took into account the Community Sustainability Strategy and the Mayor's Community Energy Plan projects.

The report noted that our climate has already begun to change. It pointed to the fact that scientific evidence indicates that this change will likely accelerate over the next several decades. Among other things, the result will be more extreme weather events.

To respond to changing climatic conditions and encourage adaptation, TEAC recommended that the Town be a leader in building a resilient community by developing an adaptation plan.

Similar to the Town's many other initiatives, TEAC's report once again demonstrated the Town's proactive approach to climate change, and the recognition of the subject's importance.

Appendix 1 to this report outlines staff-level comments which were forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. At the time of being forwarded to the Province, staff noted that all comments were subject to review, approval and/or amendment by Town Council. Town staff also noted that amended and/or additional comments may be provided by Council at a later date. Due to the short 45 day comment period ending on March 29, 2015, Town staff were not able to present these comments to Council prior to the Provincial comment deadline.

The comments are organized around key areas of interest to the Town of Halton Hills, specifically: Leadership; Province-Municipal Partnership and Resources; Land-Use Planning; Inter-Ministry Coordination; Carbon Pricing; Transportation; Infrastructure; Implementation; Education; and Community Engagement.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Sustainability is one of ten Council priorities identified in the Town's Strategic Action Plan, and repeatedly referenced throughout the Strategic Plan's Strategic Objectives and Strategic Actions. Taking action on climate change will better enable the Town to fulfill its many sustainability objectives, especially those related to energy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

At this time, there is no Financial Impact associated with this report.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:

A copy of this report will be shared per its recommendations.

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

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

Economic Prosperity
Environmental Health

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

There is a strong alignment between the Discussion Paper and the Community Sustainability Strategy, especially the focus areas of:

- Diversified and Resilient Economy
- Knowledge-Based Industry & Research and Innovation
- Energy, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Green Economy, Infrastructure

- Natural Heritage
- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation

CONSULTATION:

A copy of the Climate Change Discussion Paper was shared with appropriate Town staff. Any comments received were incorporated into the Town's comments.

CONCLUSION:

This report has provided Council with an overview of "Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015". It also sought Council's approval of Town comments as outlined in Appendix 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Damian Szybalski, M.Sc.PI, MCIP, RPP
Corporate Planning Project Lead and
Manager of Sustainability

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

David Smith
Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDIX 1 to Report No. PDS-2015-0019
-Comments to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change-



Ref: 15-037

BY MAIL AND E-MAIL

March 27, 2015

Kathy Hering, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Climate Change and Environmental Policy Division
Air Policy and Climate Change Branch
77 Wellesley Street West, Floor 10
Toronto, ON, M7A2T5

Dear Kathy:

Re: Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015
Town of Halton Hills – staff comments

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change on "Ontario's Climate Change Discussion Paper 2015".

Below, are comments from the Town of Halton Hills. They are organized around key areas of interest to the Town, specifically: Leadership; Province-Municipal Partnership and Resources; Land-Use Planning; Inter-Ministry Coordination; Carbon Pricing; Transportation; Infrastructure; Implementation; Education; and Community Engagement.

Please note that, at this time, these comments represent Town staff comments. Therefore, all comments are subject to review, approval and/or amendment by Town Council. Amended and/or additional comments may be provided by Council at a later date, and supersede the below staff comments.

Due to a pre-determined Town Council meeting schedule and reporting process, as well as the short 45 day comment period, Town staff were not able to review and present these comments to Council prior to the March 29, 2015 comment deadline. Going forward, to ensure that municipalities are effective partners and able to provide Council-endorsed comments, the Province is encouraged to provide significantly longer comment periods.

Please note the following comments:

- **Leadership:** The Province is commended on advancing discussion on climate change and for emphasizing the need for urgent action. Generally speaking, the objectives outlined in the Discussion Paper align with many actions already being undertaken by the Town of Halton Hills in the areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Specifically:

- The Town is a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Partners for Climate Protection Program (PCP), consisting of about 270 municipalities committed to taking action on climate change.
- The Town is a member of the GTA-Clean Air Council, a network of 26 GTA municipalities working collaboratively on actions that will improve air quality, and facilitate climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- The Town has and continues to implement key actions that will help mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, including its:
 - Community Sustainability Strategy
 - Mayor's Community Energy Plan
 - Green Development Standards
 - Corporate Sustainable Building Strategy
 - Transportation Master Plan
 - Cycling Master Plan
 - Construction of LEED® and highly efficient facilities
 - Use of Low Impact Development techniques
- Province – Municipal Partnership and Resources: Municipalities directly or indirectly influence almost half of all greenhouse gas emissions in Canada, including through such things as land use planning.¹ Recognizing this, municipalities have a crucial role to play in enabling the Province to reach its greenhouse gas reduction targets. For municipalities to be effective partners, the Province is respectfully requested to provide access to sustainable and flexible sources of funding. Funding that will assist with a wide scope of climate change related matters, including data collection and analysis, research, climate change/severe weather vulnerability assessments, staffing to lead and implement climate change initiatives, and assistance in establishing and growing 'severe weather reserves'. Without such financial assistance progress is likely to be stalled, greenhouse gas reduction targets not met, and responses to severe weather events caused by climate change made more challenging. Greater coordination between the Province and municipalities at all stages of policy development and implementation is also requested.
- Land-Use Planning: Buildings and development patterns are key sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and a key opportunity to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In developing a Climate Change Strategy, the Province is encouraged to:
 - Coordinate, align and enhance various provincial plans and policies (e.g. Growth Plan, Places to Grow Act, Planning Act, Municipal Act, Provincial

¹ Act Locally: The Municipal Role in Fighting Climate Change. EnviroEconomics. Prepared for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. December 8, 2009. Accessed August 25, 2014. Available at: www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Act_Locally_The_Municipal_Role_in_Fighting_Climate_Change_EN.pdf

Policy Statement, Greenbelt Plan) to expand opportunities and tools to encourage and support more efficient development, and climate change mitigation and adaptation at the municipal level.

- Update the Ontario Building Code (OBC) and related policies, guidelines, standards and legislation to:
 - Encourage net-zero construction.
 - Integrate climate change adaptation and severe weather resiliency considerations into the OBC (Climate and Seismic Data SB-1).
 - Elevate OBC standards to ensure more efficient construction and energy retrofits.
- Explore the feasibility of facilitating the disclosure of energy efficiency and associated annual energy operating costs of buildings.
- Explore incentives that will encourage the development industry to employ standards of construction that exceed OBC minimums. This may potentially include reduced Development Charges for buildings meeting high efficiency standards, with off-set funding offered by the Province.
- Explore opportunities to provide incentives to small and medium-sized businesses to implement energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction actions. This would benefit smaller municipalities such as the Town of Halton Hills where smaller businesses account for the majority of employment. Any incentives could potentially be administered by the Town and/or local utilities.
- Halton Hills includes a significant rural area and agricultural operations. Although the agricultural community is already a valuable steward of land, the Province should explore opportunities to encourage the growing of alternative crops, especially in response to changing climatic conditions.
- Partner with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), who is focused on building healthy and sustainable communities, to build professional land use planning capacity that will facilitate the planning of net zero communities and an effective response to climate change.
- **Inter-Ministry Coordination:** Climate change is a multifaceted issue, relating to land use planning, transportation and individual behaviour. Therefore, effective solutions will require a well-coordinated inter-ministry approach. Hence, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change should ensure that the directives, policies, priorities, investments and actions of all provincial Ministries, especially those of Energy, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Transportation, Education, Finance, Economic Development, and Research and Innovation, are clearly aligned with the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a low carbon economy.

Efforts should also be made to coordinate climate change policies with the Federal government, and other Provinces and Territories in order to have a coordinated national approach.

- **Carbon Pricing:** Placing a price on carbon can facilitate a shift to a low carbon future. To be effective, however, any such system must be transparent, low-cost to implement and maintain, and make it simple for municipalities to monetize the carbon emission savings from their operations. As part of the development of a carbon pricing system and a cost-benefit analysis, the Province should assess impacts on the pillars of sustainability – namely the economic, environmental and socio-cultural wellbeing of Ontario.

At this time, pending more detailed information, Town staff are unable to support a particular carbon pricing option. The Province is encouraged to closely consult with municipalities in the development of any carbon pricing system.

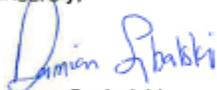
- **Transportation:** In Halton Hills, at 46%, vehicle gasoline accounts for the largest share of energy use. Private transportation is also the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Halton Hills – at 41%. A large proportion of Town residents commute out of Town for work, and a significant proportion of local jobs are filled by those commuting into Halton Hills. With no local transit service in place at this time, urgent investment is required to provide frequent all-day two-way GO Train service to and from Halton Hills, including an extension to Kitchener. Continued provincial financial support of the Smart Commute program, including the Smart Commute Halton chapter, is important as it provides effective tools to shift transportation patterns to more sustainable options. Capital and operating funding for active transportation initiatives would also be beneficial.
- **Infrastructure:** According to the Discussion Paper, the Province is planning to invest \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years. This investment should be aligned with infrastructure that contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. To support this investment, however, municipalities will require sustained and reliable assistance in building capacity around climate change. In addition, Provincial funding is required to maintain, repair and replace infrastructure either to better withstand a changing climate and/or repair damage following severe weather events.
- **Implementation:** The Town of Halton Hills has already invested significant resources in the development of a Corporate Energy Plan which will ensure the efficient and sustainable operation of municipal facilities, as well as a Local Action Plan that is intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the community. Similar documents have been prepared by many other Ontario municipalities. Therefore, it is recommended that the Province leverage these existing municipal efforts to help implement Province-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, by providing municipalities with the necessary

resources and tools for implementation. Doing so will result in a more coordinated and effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions – one that reduces duplication of effort.

- Education: Achieving significant greenhouse gas reduction targets will require transformative behaviour change. To facilitate this change, the Province is encouraged to collaborate with the Ministry of Education (and other appropriate stakeholders) in developing and delivering a comprehensive school curriculum regarding climate change.
- Community Engagement: In partnership with municipalities and other stakeholders, the Province is encouraged to develop and deliver a comprehensive communication campaign that raises awareness among Ontarians about the significant challenges posed by climate change, and the opportunities that can be leveraged through a proactive response.

If you have any questions, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Damian Szybalski
Manager of Sustainability
(905) 873-2601 ext. 2289
damians@haltonhills.ca

- c. John Linhardt, Director of Planning, Development and Sustainability
Town of Halton Hills