



REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Community Affairs Committee

REPORT FROM: Planning and Infrastructure

DATE: September 30, 2015

REPORT NO.: PI-2015-0014

RE: State of Sustainability Profile – 2015 Edition
Measuring Quality of Life in Halton Hills and Implementation
of the Community Sustainability Strategy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report PI-2015-0014, dated September 30, 2015, regarding the first bi-annual Town of Halton Hills State of Sustainability Profile be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the State of Sustainability Profile, attached under separate cover, be endorsed and distributed widely throughout the community;

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

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Halton Hills is committed to being a leader in sustainability. It is committed to taking local actions for the benefit of future generations and a better quality of life. In the past, the Town's progress in moving towards a more sustainable future was measured against the Green Plan. The results were captured in the Town's Green Plan Report Cards which were published in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The Green Plan began the Town's sustainability journey. With its 70 recommendations, the Green Plan provided direction for actions that improved the community's environmental health.

The Green Plan also provided a solid foundation for exploring the community's cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity and social well-being through a community-based Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy-Imagine Halton Hills.

Figure 1, below, illustrates the Town's sustainability journey since the establishment of the Green Plan in 2007 to the present. The next natural step in measuring the Town's journey towards sustainability is the publishing of the State of Sustainability Profile.

**Figure 1:
Our Journey to the State of Sustainability Profile**



This image is available in an alternate format, please contact ext. 2290.

COMMENTS:

1.0 Profile Overview

The purpose of the bi-annual State of Sustainability Profile is to provide Council, Town staff and the community with an engaging and high profile update on the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy. It is also to measure trends in moving towards a higher quality of life.

Recognizing that what is not measured is not managed, the Profile reports on 27 performance indicators found in the Community Sustainability Strategy. Throughout the Profile, the 27 indicators are presented as info-graphics and illustrate progress towards reaching a higher quality of life in Halton Hills. The 27 indicators are supplemented by two additional indicators related to energy use and the number of development applications, as well as brief profiles of corporate and community initiatives that have contributed to local cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and social wellbeing.

These initiative profiles are organized into seven themes:

- Recognizing Our Past
- Prioritizing Our Wellbeing
- Engaging Our Citizens
- Strengthening Our Community
- Celebrating Our Successes
- Planning Our Future
- Stating Our Sustainability.

Importantly, these profiles are not meant to capture all initiatives that have occurred either within the Town's corporate operations or within the broader community. Instead, generally speaking, the profiles highlight samples of initiatives that have occurred over the past two years (to date) and hence since the Strategy's endorsement in 2013.

2.0 Profile Structure

The State of Sustainability Profile is divided into the following key sections:

- **Message from the Mayor:** Contains a welcome message from Mayor Rick Bonnette where he discusses the importance of community partnerships to building a better community. The building of a community that is livable, thriving, healthy and green is the focus of the Mayor's comments.
- **2015 Profile:** This section highlights the Vision of the Community Sustainability Strategy and provides a description of the State of Sustainability Profile. It notes

that the profile is a report card to objectively measure the Town's progress in advancing its sustainability goals.

- **Why Sustainability?** This section provides background information on sustainability and a definition.
- **The Four Pillars:** This section summarizes the Visions and the associated Focus Areas of the four pillars of sustainability: Cultural Vibrancy, Economic Prosperity, Environmental Health and Social Wellbeing.
- **2015 at a Glance:** This section consists of the 27 indicators from the Community Sustainability Strategy with an icon beside each one showing the direction of the trend of the indicator over the past two years. The direction of the icon represents an increase (↑), decrease (↓) or no change (-) to the indicator. Also, the colour of the icon represents the trend of the indicator as being positive (green), negative (red) or no change (yellow). The asterisk (*) represents an indicator where currently there is a lack of data available to measure the indicator.
- **Recognizing Our Past:** This section profiles significant past events and projects in Halton Hills and highlights examples such as the Heritage Register, Community Covenant for military veterans, the capturing of memorabilia from the Memorial Arena and the impact of the 2013 ice storm.
- **Prioritizing Our Wellbeing:** This section highlights the many actions taken by the Town, partners of the Community Sustainability Strategy and local businesses related to our collective wellbeing. Examples include: addition of bike lanes, The Fairy Lake Stormwater Quality Improvement Project and the Youth Taxi Script Pilot Program.
- **Engaging Our Citizens:** This section highlights many engagement opportunities within the community. A few examples include: the new online service for voter look-up to assist in a better election voter turnout, increased use of the Halton Hills Library, Earth Week Celebrations and the generous donation of art by Fred Helson to the Town of Halton Hills.
- **Strengthening Our Community:** This section highlights significant events/initiatives that have helped strengthen our community between 2013 and 2015. Examples include: the implementation of Green Development Standards to maximize development's positive attributes, community donations made to the Georgetown Hospital, the creation of the Community Brand, the Physician Recruitment Program offered by the Town to attract new doctors, the Community Improvement Plan that supports revitalization of business properties, and the

addition of renewable energy projects, including the rooftop solar project at Mold-Masters SportsPlex.

- **Celebrating Our Successes:** This section highlights the many awards and successes that have occurred during the past two years, recognizing the Town's leadership. Examples include:
 - Canadian Safe Community Designation from Parachute Canada. This designation demonstrates Halton Hills' commitment to personal safety. Parachute Canada is an organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives.
 - An architectural design award for the Regan Ridge Bridge which minimizes the impact on the environment.
 - Smart Commute Gold Workplace Designation from Metrolinx and Smart Commute Halton for the participation and promotion of sustainable transportation for Town employees.
 - LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) silver certification of the expanded Mold-Masters SportsPlex.
- **Planning Our Future:** This section highlights planning, policies and projects that will shape the future of Halton Hills. Examples include: the Community Sustainability Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Vision Georgetown, intensification policies, Corporate Sustainable Building Policy, Mayor's Community Energy Plan and the streetlight conversion to much more efficient LED technology.
- **Stating Our Sustainability:** This section is a visual summary of the 27 indicators in one graph. It demonstrates a positive overall trend over the past two years.
- **Data Sources:** For indicators where data was available, this section concludes the Profile with summary info-graphics. It also lists all the sources of data.

3.0 Sustainability Performance Indicators

The 27 indicators in the Community Sustainability Strategy monitor and track sustainability progress over time. These indicators provide a snapshot of the Town's sustainability progress. Based on data availability, however, some of the indicators included in the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy were modified for the purpose of including them in the Profile. Where possible, this Profile plus future editions of the Profile will include additional data sources to match the indicators included in the Strategy as closely as possible.

For each of the four pillars, the indicators considered and/or included were:

Cultural Vibrancy

- Total kilometres of trails
- Library use
- Hectares of Town-owned open space
- Annual survey of the variety of participation in cultural activities and organizations
- Total participant hours for recreation programs per 1,000 persons
- Number of accessible facilities for community groups
- Number of designated heritage properties and districts

Economic Prosperity

- Employment participation rate in all sectors for those 15 years and over
- Number of green jobs
- Number of business sectors accounting for 50% of economic activity
- Average Halton Hills' family income
- Number of hectares of land re-designated from agricultural purposes to other uses
- Total gross farm receipts
- Ratio of residential to non-residential property assessment
- Percentage of people that work from home
- Commercial floor space per capita
- Employment density per hectare

Environmental Health

- Average Daily Flow of Water per person
- Tree canopy coverage as a percentage of Town area
- Number of people/km² in the urban areas and rural areas
- Number of buildings certified by recognized green building programs.
- Number of renewable energy projects and total capacity of renewable energy output

Social Wellbeing

- Mode of transportation to work
- Number of households spending more than 30% of gross income on shelter per 1,000 households
- Number of low income households
- Number of citizens dependent on social services per 1,000 residents
- Range of services available for Halton Hills seniors who require significant assistance

Supplementary indicators highlighted in the State of Sustainability Profile include the overall energy and natural gas consumption by Town facilities, and the number of development applications processed by the Town.

Using examples, the following section provides an explanation of how the coding or classification of the indicators should be interpreted:

- The Cultural Vibrancy indicator of “Total Length of Municipal Trails” has an upward green colour arrow beside it. The green upward arrow means that the total length of municipal trails has increased between 2013 and 2015. This is a positive reflection of the indicator.
- The Economic Prosperity indicator of “Total Gross Farm Receipts” has a downward red colour arrow. The red downward arrow means that farm revenue has decreased between 2001 and 2011. This is the most current data available. This is a negative reflection of the indicator.
- The Cultural Vibrancy indicator of “Accessible Facilities Available for Community Use” has a yellow dash beside it. This means that the number of accessible facilities available for groups has not changed over the past two year.
- The Environmental Health indicator of “Area of Tree Canopy Coverage” has an asterisk beside it because data was not available to measure this indicator.

4.0 Performance Indicator Results

The following section provides a brief summary of the overall trends in the indicators for each of the pillars.

- **Cultural Vibrancy**
In terms of the indicators measuring Cultural Vibrancy, five out of the seven indicators have a positive trend. No data is available for the indicator of “Annual Survey of the Variety of Participation in Cultural Activities and Organizations”. No change is noted for the “Accessible Facilities for Community Use.”
- **Economic Prosperity**
In terms of the indicators measuring Economic Prosperity, six out of 10 indicators have a positive trend and they mostly relate to the type of employment in Halton Hills. The “Land Re-designated from Agricultural Purposes” indicator shows a decrease in the agricultural area re-designated to other uses. This is a positive trend and is therefore coded with a green arrow.

The most recent data shows a decrease in “Total Gross Farm Receipts” between 2006 and 2011 from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It is a challenge

obtaining data for some of the indicators because the data is measured every five years and is collected by other organizations.

- **Environmental Health**

In terms of the indicators measuring Environmental Health, two out of five indicators show a positive trend, specifically the ones showing an increasing population density and the number of buildings becoming classified as 'green'. One indicator shows a decrease in water usage however this is good trend and is therefore reflected with a green arrow.

- **Social Wellbeing**

In terms of the indicators measuring Social Wellbeing, the most recent data is from 2006 to 2011. This most recent data is from Statistics Canada and is not from the past two years, however, over time the data will provide a valuable benchmark for the social indicators.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The State of Sustainability Profile advances and relates directly to the Town's Strategic Plan and its sustainability focus, including these multiple Council strategic priorities:

- 5.B): Continue to implement the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy, in collaboration with community partners.
- 5.E): Address the Social Pillar of Sustainability by focusing on improving services for seniors, youth and the disabled.
- 5.F): Implement the Mayor's Community Energy Plan.
- 5.G): Maintain and support the Town Sustainability Implementation Committee.
- 7.A): Support community initiatives to promote local food production that contributes to the viability of the agricultural economy and preservation of the agricultural land base, as articulated in the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact associated with this report.

COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:

The next steps will be focused on communication of the State of Sustainability Profile through various media channels. The Profile will be widely publicized through paper and electronic distribution. In addition to being posted on the Town's website and Intranet, the State of Sustainability Profile will be made available in printed format at Town facilities, Halton Hills Hydro, community events and, where possible, businesses and organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the BIAs. A media release and social media will also be used as promotional tools.

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? This report supports all of the sustainability pillars: Cultural Vibrancy, Environmental Health, Economic Prosperity and Social Well-being.

In summary, the Sustainability Implications of this report are as follows:

The State of Sustainability Profile measures the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy. Using a series of indicators, it provides a snapshot of how well Halton Hills is moving towards reaching its vision for a more sustainable future and quality of life characterized by cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and social wellbeing.

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

CONSULTATION:

The collection of data required for the State of Sustainability Profile was a collaborative effort and information was provided by all Town departments.

CONCLUSION:

This report has provided Council, Town staff and the community with a status update on the implementation of the Community Sustainability Strategy. It accomplished this via the first bi-annual State of Sustainability Profile.

The indicators in the State of Sustainability Profile illustrate our performance and allow us to gauge quality of life in Halton Hills in terms of our cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health and social wellbeing.

The significant progress to date provides a solid foundation and momentum for future actions.

Respectfully submitted,

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