



CITY OF BELLEVILLE
Perry DeCola, General Manager
Environmental Services
Report No. GMES-2021-08
On behalf of the Green Task Force
June 28, 2021

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To: Mayor and Members of Council

Subject: Climate Emergency Declaration

Recommendation:

“THAT pursuant to the General Manager of Environmental Services’ Report No. GMES-2021-08, Council Adopt the Green Task Force’s Recommendation that a Climate Emergency be declared in the City of Belleville; and

THAT Council direct staff to begin a preliminary investigation of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Partners in Climate Protection Program.”

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The City of Belleville’s Strategic Plan identifies nine strategic themes. This report aligns with the “Environment” strategic theme to “protect and enhance the quality of our natural environment to ensure there is clean water and air and a liveable environment, for the benefit of current residents and future generations”; to “provide facilities and support initiatives that reduce air pollution”; and to “promote energy conservation and use of alternative forms of energy.”

Background:

In January 2021, the Green Task Force received a deputation by Ruth Silver, a concerned citizen, regarding the changing climate in the Quinte Region and the need for a climate emergency declaration to initiate action to address it. Following this deputation, the Green Task Force directed City staff to work with Ms. Silver on preparing a draft resolution to declare a climate emergency in Belleville. The resolution was endorsed by the Green Task Force at their meeting on April 8, 2021 and is presented in Appendix 1 for Council consideration.

A Climate Emergency Declaration is an on-the-record acknowledgement by a government that current measures to address climate change are not enough and more should be done. It is not the same as declaring a State of Emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. Unlike a State of Emergency, the proposed resolution is non-binding in nature; it indicates a clear sense of urgency and is a call to action for City staff and residents.

At the municipal level, declaring a climate emergency is primarily viewed as a strategy to:

- Signal to residents and City staff that Council cares about climate change to inspire action;
- Encourage proper planning, information, and support to address climate risks in a coordinated, collaborative way; and
- Strengthen City funding applications by demonstrating a public commitment to take action.
 - Funding opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation are on the rise (e.g. Infrastructure Canada, Natural Resources Canada, etc.)
 - Research indicates the benefits of investing in adaptation and risk mitigation outweigh the cost of such investments by a ratio of 6 to 1

The resolution drafted by City staff and Ms. Silver builds on the work done by many other Canadian communities and references rigorously researched reports prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Natural Resources Canada. The draft resolution borrows language from existing resolutions appropriate for the Belleville context and includes additional Belleville-specific content to reflect where we are today and align with existing plans and policies such as the City's Green Policy (adopted in 2008 and attached as Appendix 2 to this report).

Staff Consultation

Through a committee motion in June 2021, the Green Task Force directed staff to conduct a preliminary consultation with senior-level City staff and prepare a report to accompany the resolution to provide context to Council. The scope of this staff report is to provide a high-level overview of climate emergency declarations and the perspective of staff at this stage.

This is not to be confused with the staff report called for within the resolution itself. If Council supports the resolution as drafted, staff will prepare a subsequent report that details the actions the City has taken to-date to address climate change, how climate change is addressed in City plans and policies, courses of action comparable communities are taking, and recommendations on next steps. This subsequent report will go into much more detail and offer an assessment of options, programs and tools available to municipalities, and associated costs and funding opportunities should Council want to proceed. This report could be prepared by late September in time to inform budget deliberations.

Analysis:**Climate Change in the Quinte Region**

Belleville's climate is already changing. A local weather monitoring station shows that the average annual temperature has warmed by 1.8°C over the past 100 years, consistent with temperature changes observed elsewhere in Canada.

According to Quinte Conservation, precipitation events also appear to be larger and more intense including more winter rain storms and extreme weather events. And we can expect more changes in the future: average annual temperature in the Quinte Region is projected to rise by approx. 2 to 3°C by 2050 if climate change is left unabated.

This has the potential to cause:

- more extreme weather events such as intense rainfall, flooding, drought, extreme heat, erosion, and microbursts;
- warmer winters with more winter rain and less snow; and
- hotter and drier summers.

These changes pose risks to water quality and quantity, local wildlife, air quality, and human health and wellbeing. They also have the potential to impact City operations and capital directly by:

- Decreasing the lifespan of the City's built and natural assets and making it more difficult (and expensive) to deliver expected levels of service (e.g. damage or disruption to built infrastructure such as roads);
- Increasing liability (e.g. storm damage, overrun sewer infrastructure, etc.);
- Leading to increased energy costs, especially for fossil fuels (e.g. transit and truck fleet, heating and cooling of buildings, etc.); and
- Increasing demand by residents for services to cope with extreme temperatures.

Residents of the rural portion of the City that rely on private wells are particularly vulnerable to impact from drought.

According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), insured damage for severe weather events across Canada reached \$2.4 billion in 2020 – the fourth highest in insured losses since IBC began tracking them in 1983 – with governments and taxpayers paying out much more to repair public infrastructure damaged during those same events.

Climate Emergency Declarations in Canada

To address climate risks, 510 jurisdictions in Canada have declared a climate emergency, including the federal government. Nearby communities include:

- Prince Edward County
- Town of Cobourg
- City of Kingston
- City of Peterborough

Globally, 1,933 jurisdictions in 34 countries have passed resolutions declaring a climate emergency.

Climate Emergency Declarations at the Municipal Level

Climate emergency declarations can be a grassroots initiative brought forward by concerned residents and/or local environmental advocacy groups or a strategy used by politicians to mobilize action. When brought forward by municipal councillors, commonly stated reasons for doing so include:

- Signal to their community and City Staff that Council is committed to climate change action and wants to do more;
- Kickstart the process of embedding climate change considerations in municipal decision-making for the purposes of managing risk; or
- Renew focus on a course of action already underway and fast-track mitigation and adaptation measures.

Municipal declarations can take many forms: some municipal resolutions call on other levels of government to take action while others go so far as to set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or adapt to climate risks through prescribed measures such as green development standards, green space conservation and fleet electrification. The language of the resolution is driven by the particular context of the community adopting it and their maturity with respect to climate change policy and planning.

They are seen as particularly effective at the local level given that Canadian municipalities are the owners and operators of 60% of public infrastructure and are on the frontlines of both the impacts of climate change and the solutions to it.

As demonstrated in a brief review of neighbouring communities in Appendix 3, the journey a municipality takes to adopting a resolution and the actions that follow can take different routes. However, a commonality amongst many Canadian communities declaring emergencies is membership in [FCM's Partners in Climate Protection \(PCP\) program](#) or consideration of membership as a result of the declaration. The PCP program is widely-respected with over 400 municipal members and offers resources, support and guidance to municipalities working on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Coincidentally, the Quinte Field Naturalists sent a letter to the Green Task Force, Mayor & Council in June 2021 specifically requesting that the City consider membership in the PCP program.

City of Belleville's Green Policy and Climate Change Planning

The resolution language drafted by the Green Task Force reflects the City's existing commitment to develop an Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan with a goal to reduce the carbon footprint of the municipality, as stated in its Green Policy adopted by Belleville City Council in 2008 (see Appendix 2). Budget has not been allocated to the development of a

plan to-date (to be referred to as a Climate Action Plan for simplicity). The Green Task Force believes a Climate Emergency Declaration is an effective way to jumpstart meaningful action toward the development of such a plan.

The resolution calls for a staff report that outlines recommendations on next steps. Having not yet prepared this report, we cannot say if a Climate Action Plan will be the recommendation put forward by staff; however, City staff is supportive of investigating the feasibility of a Climate Action Plan as a next step. In lockstep, City staff is also supportive of beginning a preliminary investigation of FCM's PCP program, as per the request of the Quinte Field Naturalists.

Increasingly, staff is being asked by higher levels of government to take climate considerations into account in the course of carrying out their work. Recent examples include considering climate risk in our Quality Management System for drinking water and in the development of an asset management plan for water and wastewater infrastructure, as well as trails, parks, piers and harbours. The need to develop internal capacities at the municipal level is so great that Asset Management Ontario recently dedicated a multi-day conference with 60 speakers/sessions to the topic of integrating climate impacts into infrastructure asset management planning. In the near future, we anticipate viewing municipal decisions through a climate lens will become a required practice.

The staff report called for in the resolution would be a useful interdepartmental exercise to map out the measures and policies we already have in place that address climate change, and also to identify our gaps and vulnerabilities. This will help staff navigate new requirements and inform our responses to inquiries made by various stakeholders as to the City's plan to manage the potential risks caused by a changing climate and what work has been done to-date to prepare.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City at this time.

Conclusion:

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council adopt the Green Task Force's recommendation that a Climate Emergency be declared in the City of Belleville. It is also recommended that staff be directed to begin a preliminary investigation into FCM's PCP program.

Respectfully Submitted,



Perry DeCola
General Manager, Environmental Services

Appendix 1: Green Task Force's Resolution to Declare a Climate Emergency in the City of Belleville

WHEREAS the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states that human activities related to the burning of fossil fuels have warmed the earth on average 1°C;

AND WHEREAS to avoid unmanageable impacts of climate change, warming should be limited to 1.5°C, which would require a 45% decline in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050;

AND WHEREAS Canadians have among the highest per person GHG emissions in the world, and municipalities have control either directly or indirectly over 50% of Canada's GHG emissions and therefore have a crucial role to play;

AND WHEREAS Canada's Changing Climate Report indicates that Canada is warming at twice the global rate, resulting in temperature and precipitation extremes leading to more frequent and intense droughts, forest fires, flooding and heat waves with some of these impacts already experienced locally;

AND WHEREAS much of the financial damage associated with climate change will come from impacts to municipal core infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, water, wastewater and stormwater systems, and from damage to natural infrastructure, such as storm damage to street trees, and flooding of trails and open spaces;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary not only to reduce carbon emissions, but also to increase adaptation efforts, and that these measures can offer communities both cost savings over the long-term and co-benefits including improved air and water quality, enhanced services and livability for residents, increased innovation, and economic development;

AND WHEREAS many municipalities across Ontario and Canada understand the major benefits of and the need to be at the forefront of action on climate change, with 509 of them having declared a climate emergency already, including neighbouring Prince Edward County, City of Kingston, Town of Cobourg and City of Peterborough;

AND WHEREAS the City of Belleville's 2008 Green Policy specifies that the City shall prepare and execute an Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan with a stated goal of reducing the carbon footprint of the municipality;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

THAT our municipality declares a climate emergency for the purpose of naming, framing and deepening our commitment to protecting our community, economy and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change;

THAT our municipality commits to making decisions and acting in a manner that is compatible with the recommendations of the IPCC's 2018 report as they relate to the reduction of municipal greenhouse gas emissions;

THAT the City of Belleville reaffirm its commitment to the preparation of an Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan with a focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the necessary funding to support it;

THAT Council direct staff to prepare a report that outlines: 1) the actions the City is currently taking to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate change (corporate and community); 2) how climate change is addressed in the City's planning and strategic documents; 3) the actions that comparable municipalities are taking to reduce their GHG emissions and adapt to climate change; and 4) recommendations on how best to proceed, including opportunities to engage other levels of government and leverage external funding sources;

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Mayor Jim Harrison of the City of Quinte West; Mayor Brian Ostrander of the Municipality of Brighton; Reeve of Tyendinaga Township and Warden of Hastings County Rick Phillips; the Premier of Ontario; the Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; representatives Daryl Kramp MPP, Todd Smith MPP, Derek Sloan MP, and Neil Ellis MP.

Appendix 2: City of Belleville Green Policy, 2008

Policy
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MEMO

TO: Councillor Culhane, Chair
Belleville Green Team

FROM: Ms. Julie C. Oram
Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk

DATE: July 29, 2008

RE: **Green Policy**
6.2 & 8.a.1, Belleville City Council Meeting, July 28, 2008

This is to advise you that at the Council Meeting of July 28, 2008, the following resolution was **approved**.

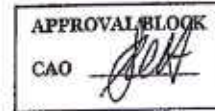
"THAT Council adopt Green Policy No. CC-004."

I trust this is sufficient.



Julie C. Oram, AMCT
Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk

JCO/nh



City of Belleville

CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Julie C. Oram, Director of Corporate Services/City Clerk
Report No. DCS-2008-10
July 28, 2008

To: His Worship Mayor Neil R. Ellis
and Members of City Council

Subject: Green Policy

Recommendation:

"THAT Council adopt Green Policy No. CC-004."

Background:

For the last several months, the Green Team has been collectively working on and developing the groundwork, in the form of a policy (attached) that would promote environmentally responsible decision making relative to the municipality's operations and services.

The policy introduces the need for an "Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan" that will identify and prioritize environmental and sustainability initiatives to be undertaken by the municipality. Through the strategic planning and budget process, staff will identify methods, procedures and funding sources that will help to realize the main goal of reducing the carbon footprint of the municipality.

The Green Policy confirms Council's commitment to a strategic plan to manage the resources of the municipality today, to meet the needs of today and the future, without impacting future generations.

Financial:

Increased funding sources are being offered by both federal and provincial levels of governments, and various other agencies, many conditional on a larger share of the funding to be spent by the municipalities. Many applications for funding must be supported by business plans, corporate planning documents, policies and procedures that support such things as energy reduction and conservation initiatives.

8. a. Reports
1 of 10

The costs will be identified through the yearly operating and capital budget and corporate business plan processes.


Respectfully submitted,



Julie C. Oram, AMCT
Corporate Services Director/City Clerk

attachment

DRAFT

	<h2>STANDARD POLICY</h2>	S.P. #: CC004
	SUBJECT: Green Policy	DEPARTMENT: Corporate Services
COUNCIL AUTHORITY:	NEW: X	REVISED:

1.0 PURPOSE AND BASIS:

The City of Belleville recognizes the importance of a healthy, sustainable environment, and is committed to fulfilling the Strategic Plan and Community Vision with regard to sustainability. The City will endeavour to preserve and green Belleville’s environment while maintaining economical, social, cultural and community health. The City is dedicated to meeting the needs of the community today while ensuring a desirable future for following generations.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that municipal decision making will endeavour to identify and prioritize environmental and sustainability initiatives through the preparation and execution of an Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan.

The goal of an Environmental/Sustainability Action and Implementation Plan (the Plan) is to create and maintain a healthy, sustainable and vibrant community through reduction of the “carbon footprint” of the municipality. In addition, it will identify implementation models, methods of measuring progress and potential external funding sources.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy’s emphasis will be on the City’s corporate operations and services, and educating the public. Through the development of the Plan, policy and procedural gaps will be identified and new environmentally progressive municipal strategies as well as external funding and program opportunities will be considered. Proposed actions will positively impact the community at many levels.

3.0 SPECIFIC POLICY

The Plan will be considered a living document which will continue to evolve through the implementation of municipal best practices.

The Plan will be developed through Council, staff, public and stakeholder dialogue and engagement.

The Plan will look at all aspects of environmental and community sustainability, conservation and green economic development and procurement within our local municipality. It will outline approaches to implementing policies and programs as necessary to fulfill the goal of the Plan.

The Plan will support green policy directives such as the following examples where deemed appropriate:

1. A Green Building Policy for the Construction of Corporate (City) Buildings
2. An Ethical and Green Purchasing Policy
3. Urban Forestry & Tree Policy
4. City energy use strategy
5. Public transportation initiatives
6. Sewage and organic waste energy recovery programs
7. Household water conservation programs

4.0 LIMITATION:

The development of the Plan through this policy applies to the City of Belleville's corporate operations and services at the direction of Council and the Chief Administrative Officer and will be supported through the development of specific policies and procedures and funding to be approved by Council.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by municipal Council.

Appendix 3: Climate Action in Neighbouring Communities

Community	Course of Action/Timeline
Prince Edward County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2019: Climate Emergency declared by Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion brought forward by Councillor Kate McNaughton ○ Supported by local citizens through letters to Council ● Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) established in 2010 but dissolved in 2013 during a governance review process. As part of Climate Emergency declaration, Council re-established the EAC and meetings resumed in 2020. ● Not a member of FCM's Partners in Climate Protection (PCP) program but EAC interested in pursuing membership and interest expressed by CAO on behalf of senior staff ● Have not yet developed a Climate Action Plan or completed a Greenhouse Gas Inventory (corporate or community)
Town of Cobourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2008: First Climate Action Plan completed, including GHG inventory ● 2011: Town of Cobourg joined FCM's PCP Program ● 2019: Sustainability and Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (SCCAC) established ● 2019: The SCCAC asked Council to make a climate emergency declaration and accelerate greenhouse gas reduction actions in the Town of Cobourg. ● 2019: Contract staff position created with funding from FCM to lead GHG inventory, Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, etc. ● 2020: Community Climate Action Plan Update 2020 approved by Council
City of Kingston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2004: Joined FCM's PCP Program ● 2010: adopted Sustainable Kingston Plan (SKP) ● 2014: adopted Kingston Climate Action Plan (KCAP). Built on SKP and included carbon emission reduction targets for the community of 15% below 2011 baseline levels by 2020 and 30% by 2030. ● 2015: adopted a Corporate Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to reduce the carbon footprint of municipal operations. Includes target of 8% below a 2011 baseline by 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed community and corporate GHG emissions inventories for years: 2000, 2006-

Community	Course of Action/Timeline
City of Peterborough	<p>2011, 2014-2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● March 2019: Climate Emergency Resolution passed by Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First Ontario municipality to declare emergency ○ Brought forward by Councillor Robert Kiley ○ Rationale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the City meets its goal of a 30% GHG reduction by 2030. ▪ Galvanize council and the community into action and deepen commitment to climate action. ▪ Make climate leadership a strategic priority for the municipality. ● 2010: Greater Peterborough Area (GPA), of which City of Peterborough is a member, adopted an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan ● 2014: GPA member communities joined FCM's PCP program ● 2016: City of Peterborough Council adopted the Greater Peterborough Area Climate Change Action Plan (regionally coordinated approach) ● September 2019: City declared a Climate Emergency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion brought forward by Mayor and supported by a number of concerned citizens who spoke in support of the declaration ● February 2020: Published City of Peterborough Community Climate Change Resiliency Strategy created with input from a Stakeholder Working Group composed of community organizations, local experts, and city staff