

REPORT

Council

Meeting Date: October 21, 2024

FROM: Corporate Strategy and Government Relations

DATE: October 8, 2024

SUBJECT: **Climate Emergency Declaration Progress Report**

LOCATION: Town Hall

WARD: Town-wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled “Climate Emergency Declaration Progress Report” dated October 8, 2024, be received.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Climate Emergency Declaration Progress report is an annual requirement of the Climate Emergency Declaration and details the progress made in fulfilling the six goals of the Climate Emergency declared by [Council in June of 2019](#).
- This report summarizes the completion of climate action initiatives from across the organization, in our buildings, equipment, data, plans, governance structure and promotion and community outreach.
- Highlights include:
 - Introducing electric buses into Transit's fleet
 - Achieving LEED Gold Certification at the Oakville Trafalgar Community Centre
 - Completion of a district energy feasibility study for the Hospital District.
 - Improving town alignment with the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework by 15%
 - Increased focus on community education, promotion and outreach
 - Simplifying zoning rules for rooftop solar panels and permit fees for green installations
 - Hiring of an energy coach (Strategic Business Advisor) to support energy efficiency and low carbon options for development in the community

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Oakville is committed to climate action leadership to help accelerate greenhouse gas reductions and increase community resiliency. In the 2019 Climate Emergency resolution, staff were directed to report annually on climate change actions to:

1. Address the operations of the corporation of the municipality.
2. Identify the public's role in the climate crisis and the actions the community can do to fight climate change.
3. Embed a climate crisis lens into the Town's asset management program.
4. Incorporate climate change crisis policies into Livable Oakville, the Town's official plan.
5. Increase action and ambition for the Town's climate change crisis-related activities; and
6. Include performance metrics to track progress and timelines for achieving key deliverables/major milestones, and a strategy to report back publicly on progress of municipal and public efforts.

Tasks that support the delivery of these actions have been summarized for 2024 and can be found in **Appendix A**.

This report outlines actions that have been completed this year that are in alignment with the environmental sustainability strategic priority while capturing climate action efforts from program and service areas across the organization.

COMMENTS:

The Corporate Strategy and Government Relations (CSGR) department focused on strengthening coordination of climate action among program and service areas this past year. Staff from various programs and services have worked to keep the momentum of climate action response moving forward. The Climate Action team has worked closely with internal partners to embed climate considerations into ongoing and future work, continuing to reinforce climate action as an organizational priority and maintaining alignment with the Environmental Sustainability strategic priority from the [Town of Oakville Council Strategic Plan and 2023-2026 Action Plan](#).

The town's climate action response extends beyond the CSGR department with many climate-related initiatives progressing this year, reinforcing climate action as an organizational priority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure the town's services, operations, and infrastructure are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Achievements in 2023/2024 demonstrate the town's leadership and commitment to address the climate emergency.

Spotlight of achievements in 2024 for the organization include:

- Oakville Transit introduced 15 battery electric buses into its fleet in 2023, specifically for its specialized Ride On-Demand service. This has reduced the environmental impact of Oakville Transit by cutting down on diesel fuel consumption and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Oakville Transit will be receiving 15 additional battery electric buses at the end of 2024. **(Oakville Transit)**
- Fourteen electric fleet vehicles were deployed to building inspectors in 2024. **(Building Services)**
- Oakville Trafalgar Community Centre received LEED Gold Certification for green excellence. **(Facility Services)**
- Two new electric ice resurfacers will be deployed by the end of 2024 as lifecycle replacement of natural gas units. Each electric ice resurfacer reduces GHG emissions by approximately 29 tonnes. **(Recreation and Culture)**
- Feasibility studies completed for Iroquois Ridge and Glen Abbey community centres, which are in the top 5 GHG-emitting facilities, to identify low-carbon retrofit opportunities. **(Facility Services)**
- The district energy feasibility study has been completed for the proposed Oakville hospital district area. **(CSGR)**
- Development of a corporate carbon and energy dashboard to identify the town's high GHG-emitting facilities and identify highest impact projects. **(Facility Services)**
- Continued addition of building controls to sites and optimization of energy use through said controls. **(Facility Services)**
- Oakville Fire updated its [2024 Emergency Plan](#) to include climate mitigation measures and integrated climate considerations to asset management plans to increase resilience. This will reduce risks and opportunities related to emergency preparedness, mitigation, response & recovery. **(Oakville Fire)**
- Staff are working to transform the long-term capital planning process to embed climate considerations in planned and future work. **(Asset Management)**

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- In collaboration with Planning and Development, the zoning by-law was amended (in 2023) to be less restrictive on rooftop solar panel installations since the Green Energy Act was repealed. **(Building Services)**
 - Permit fees for green initiatives (such as solar panels) were reduced to a flat rate. **(Building Services)**
 - In September, an energy coach (Strategic Business Advisor) position was filled to assist in developing a program focused on energy efficiency and low carbon options for development in the community. **(Building Services)**
 - Continued work to improve the operational efficiency of our pools by reducing water, chemical, and energy waste. Digital platforms have been installed at Iroquois Ridge and Oakville Trafalgar pools that will mitigate risk as it tracks and optimizes pool performance continuously. **(Recreation and Culture)**
 - Improving the inventory of cycling facilities in Oakville, using AI machine-learning technology to capture all bike lanes, signed bike routes, sharrows, and paved shoulders. Staff then established a standard operating procedure to transfer the information into a GIS database periodically. These efforts help build a solid foundation in the current asset of cycling facilities, to help maintain/expand the infrastructure, thereby encouraging more ridership. **(Transportation & Engineering)**
 - Development of discussion papers to inform the town's ongoing Official Plan review that will put forward policy and project recommendations that address climate change through mitigation and or adaptation. **(Planning and Development)**
 - Rejuvenating the Smart Commute program, in partnership with Milton, Burlington, Halton Hills and other municipalities in the GTHA, to promote sustainable modes of commuters amongst participating businesses in Oakville. **(Transportation & Engineering)**
 - Completed a review of small gas-powered equipment for corporate and community use and deployed an annual education and awareness campaign encouraging residents to choose electric yard maintenance tools over gas-powered alternatives. **(CSGR)**
 - Reviewed 2025 business cases for climate considerations to document process for next submission cycle. **(CSGR)**

Communicating Climate Action at the Town of Oakville

The Climate Story initiative started in Fall of 2023 with the purpose of improving the way the town shares information with the corporation and community on climate related projects. Staff completed four actions to improve communication on climate action:

1. [External Website Refresh](#)

The town updated the external Environment webpage to include up to date and relevant information related to climate action. Residents can find information on the town's progress in responding to the climate emergency and improvements made in managing our carbon footprint and improving energy efficiency.

2. [Climate Action Initiatives in Oakville - GIS Map](#)

The Climate Action Initiative Map was launched to help residents learn about climate action initiatives happening in the town. Staff from across the organization continue to update the map as projects with a climate solution begin.



3. [Climate Interactive House](#)

Together with Halton Hills and Burlington, the town has launched the climate interactive house to promote education and awareness of how residents can take better charge of minimizing their carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency. The interactive tool promotes various ways residents can implement changes in their house and in their daily activities.



4. Climate Action Internal SharePoint Hub

The Climate Action team has a new dedicated internal SharePoint page that will serve as a one-stop hub for climate action information. Staff will have access to the most current reports, engagement and outreach events, training opportunities and tools and resources to stay current on climate related topics.

An annual communications plan has been implemented to promote the climate action at the town.

Update on Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)

Staff continue to work on embedding climate considerations in our decision making processes while using the [Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure framework](#) as a guide to do so. Alignment with this framework will allow the town to incorporate climate-related risks and opportunities into risk management, strategic planning and decision-making processes to improve assessment of climate risk and impact on the town’s assets.

The town’s initial assessment completed by Manifest Climate in 2022 revealed that 19 of 39 actions were being disclosed. Staff had committed to completing six actions under the governance pillar of the framework shown in the table below.

	TCFD Area	Recommendation	Identified Gap
1	Governance	Establish a clear process to inform and enable management-level authority for climate matters	No Gap: the town is publicly disclosing
2	Governance	Establish a regular cadence for the Board review of climate-related matters	
3	Governance	Delegate appropriate and clear authority to promote management-level authority on climate matters	
4	Governance	Set up a documented process to govern the Board's oversight of climate-related risks, opportunities, goals, and targets	
5	Governance	Integrate climate-related matters into key areas of Board/Board Committee decision-making	
6	Governance	Assign clear responsibility for climate oversight with Board members	

The six actions were completed earlier this year, bringing the town’s score up to 25 of 39 actions being disclosed, a 15% increase from last year. Alignment with the TCFD framework will continue into 2025 with staff building on governance and

focusing on the metrics and targets pillar of the framework. Staff are also developing a process to embed climate considerations in the 10-year capital plan in parallel with the budget cycle. This process will help to inform what the financial climate investment will be for planned work.

The Need for Oversight and Governance on Climate Related Initiatives

The Climate Change Advisory Committee (Committee), with support from the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), brings together staff from internal departments to develop strategic direction and collaborate to advance climate change action. The Terms of Reference for this committee was developed and approved by ELT which can be referenced in **Appendix B**.

The committee meets regularly to discuss active climate initiatives, providing expertise and sharing information, further embedding climate considerations and reporting to ELT twice a year on climate initiatives where feedback and direction may be needed. This committee is also focused on accelerating the reduction of GHGs and helps to streamline reporting and communicate progress towards achieving GHG reduction targets and increasing resiliency. The Committee to date has:

- Initial review and feedback on the town's participation in the carbon market, specifically the Federal Government's Clean Fuel Regulation Program, with additional recommendations to ELT to follow
- Reviewed the 2025 business cases for climate opportunities for the capital budget.
- Reviewed the 2026 capital forecast, applying a climate lens for climate opportunities and considerations.
- Support the development of a Sustainability Consultant Roster for specialized sustainability expertise to support climate projects/initiatives.

The Committee has shown improved collaboration to the climate action program and emerging topics while providing ELT and Council the opportunity to provide oversight and governance on climate action work moving across the organization.

Reviewing Climate Action and Sustainability Policy

Staff are currently reviewing the [Environmental Sustainability Policy](#) and associated procedures to ensure that the town's climate procedures are relevant and effective in our effort to respond to the climate emergency. Staff are focused on an Electric Vehicle Plan for the town, which will begin by setting out a procedure to guide staff on how to manage its existing EV charging infrastructure. As electrification of the town's fleet progresses, staff will look to develop a holistic Electric Vehicle Plan to address greening the town's fleet and small equipment in 2025.

Corporate Climate Resiliency Plans Integration with Town Program and Services

Climate Resiliency Action plans were developed for Facilities and Construction Management (FCM) and Recreation and Culture. Staff are currently working to implement the outcomes of the resiliency plans together with the support of FCM, Recreation and Culture and Communications. Staff are implementing the Facility Climate Communication Plan created to highlight the climate friendly features of town facilities. On-site signage for Oakville Trafalgar Community Centre is being designed and will be complimented and promoted via social media campaign later this year.

The development of the Oakville Special Event Plan is underway; from a climate perspective, the focus is on planning for increased incidents of extreme weather protocols. Staff will be applying a climate lens to all aspects of recreational programming to better understand the environmental impacts, promote natural resources conservation, waste reduction and diversion, air quality protection and extreme weather resilience.

Engagement and Resilience in partnership with Community Organizations

As the town continues to address climate adaptation efforts, staff continue to work with [OakvilleReady](#), which is a program supported by eight community organizations, the Halton Environment Network as well as the town and regional climate and emergency management departments. This past year, the OakvilleReady collaborative worked to launch the [Community Climate Action Grant](#) awarding a total of \$10,000 to support five projects that seek to increase climate resiliency. This grant received several applicants in its first year with projects addressing active transportation, urban forestry, biodiversity and more.

During Emergency Preparedness Week, OakvilleReady provided an opportunity for the community to hear from climate expert [Dr. Blair Feltmate](#), who discussed climate resiliency measures to protect against flooding, extreme temperatures and high wind events. The OakvilleReady collaborative also hosted 70 Oakville Scouts at town hall to educate participants on the risks of extreme weather relating to climate change. Climate Action staff supported the [Mayor's Youth Climate Action](#) fund, an initiative supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, providing funding to Oakville youth that are aspiring leaders in climate change solutions. Climate Action staff also participated in [Oak Park Fall Fair](#), Generation Green, [Fire Prevention Day](#) and the [Halton Children's Water Festival](#) this year.

Education and awareness are an integral part of the climate action program and provides the opportunity for climate action staff to hear directly from the community on climate issues that matter most. The Town of Oakville continues to be a leader in

climate action ensuring a sustainable and livable community for generations to come.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

There is no impact to the public with the receipt of this report.

(B) FINANCIAL

There are no direct financial implications to receiving this report although with continued review of the capital budget by the Climate Change Advisory Committee and embedding a climate lens to future project work, increases in budget for varying programs and services can be expected and that if needed, will be brought to Council during the budget process.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

As the climate action program is further embedded into program and service areas, there may be updates to existing procedures and processes and development of new processes to support his work.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses the following Council strategic priorities: Environmental Sustainability, Accountable Government and Community Belonging.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

This report depicts the climate action efforts driven by staff over the past year to address the Climate Emergency declared by Council which aligns with the town's long-term emission reduction goals and provides an opportunity to enhance and support climate change adaption and mitigation efforts.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Climate Action Program Plan

Appendix B: Terms of Reference – Climate Change Advisory Committee

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