



Subject: *Climate Change Action Plan -2025/2026 Proposed Project - Council Engagement*
To: Corporate and Residential Services Committee
Date Prepared: January 27, 2024
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Approved by: Adam Clarkson, Director Corporate Services

Summary

This report is highlighting the Municipal Climate Change Action Plan Update project that is proposed in the 2025/2026 Sustainability workplan. The Municipality's current Municipal Climate Change Action Plan (MCCAP) was created in 2013, internally, as part of the 2010-2014 Municipal Funding Agreement. It includes content such as climate change impacts and hazards for East Hants, recommendations of further climate change research and also identified priority projects.

A comprehensive engagement strategy is a key component of the MCCAP project. The project plan proposes to engage Council, staff and the community help enhance the municipality's resilience to climate change impacts; a strong engagement approach will strengthen our ability to secure funding for climate related projects.

The MCCAP update project will take an interdisciplinary approach, and will assist with increasing our resiliency as a municipality across our service areas, with particular collaboration with the Emergency Management Office.

Financial Impact Statement

An amount of \$3,000 was included in the 2025/2026 draft budget to support engagement for this proposed project.

Recommendation

Staff recommend climate engagement as part of the MCCAP project begins at the Council level. Staff recommend this engagement starts with a Council Workshop, in conjunction with the Climate Action Training opportunity with the Clean Foundation per the November 2024 motion C24(384).

Recommended Motion

Move that the Corporate and Residential Services Committee recommend that Council direct staff to schedule a Climate Engagement workshop with Council in support of the Municipal Climate Change Action Plan Update for the April Executive Committee Extension Date (April 17, 2025).

Background

The current MCCAP was created in 2013 as part of the 2010-2014 Municipal Funding Agreement. For the preparation of this plan, an Adaptation Committee was created to assist with its development. Content of the MCCAP included considering the impacts and hazards affecting East Hants, future climate change research, affected locations, impacts to municipal services and facilities, mitigation actions, economic implications, and priority projects for adaptation.

Through applying for different funding opportunities related to sustainability, staff have identified topics of high importance that funders are considering in their application evaluations. Public engagement is a reoccurring requirement of funding applications; alongside illustrating what consideration has been made for equity-deserving and marginalized communities; what planning and reporting has been performed to support

the project; and how climate resilience, our carbon footprint and nature has been considered in our project. This highlights the importance of updating our MCCAP to a living document to account for current and future sustainability initiatives we would like to participate in as a municipality. It also shows the importance of engaging our community on the topic to better understand their concerns and interest in these projects.

Since the development of the 2013 MCCAP, there have been steps made to address the priority projects identified, but the document has not been formally revised or updated since its creation. Therefore, with the new Sustainability Coordinator now on staff and our partnership with the Clean Foundation's Community Climate Capacity (CCC) program, we have an opportunity and the capacity to update the MCCAP, taking into consideration the changes within the municipality and the updated science and resources that are available.

Community Climate Capacity Program

The CCC program is funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change and is providing 19 (nineteen) municipalities and communities support through access to Clean Foundation specialist staff. Their staff have expertise in areas such as: policy and planning, energy and mitigation, adaptation, funding and engagement. Examples of the communities participating in this program, along with the Municipality of East Hants, include Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and the Municipality of Colchester. This expertise supports municipal staff with sustainability and climate initiatives, such as the MCCAP update.

Discussion

Updating the MCCAP and utilizing it as a living document will support the municipality to enhance our resilience to climate impacts, mitigate climate risks and help identify priorities and future workplans. Also, an updated MCCAP will strengthen the municipality's ability to secure funding for climate-related projects.

The MCCAP update will include a climate risk assessment to identify and evaluate the potential impacts of climate change on East Hants' environment, infrastructure, and economic and social systems. This assessment will provide a roadmap to resiliency, support emergency management initiatives and help identify strategies to assist East Hants and its communities to be better prepared and resilient to climate impacts.

To assist in the development of the updated MCCAP, staff will create an engagement strategy to gather feedback on the topic. This will provide the municipality information on local climate concerns, will allow us to utilize feedback from impacted communities and ensure the plan addresses interdisciplinary issues in the context of climate change.

The engagement strategy would be discussed in more detail with Council at the proposed workshop. At a high-level, the engagement strategy proposes to engage Council (starting with the proposed workshop), staff, and the community. The Council Workshop would be structured in conjunction with the Climate Action Training opportunity Council accepted from the Clean Foundation per the November 2024 motion C24(384).

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Updating the Municipality's Municipal Climate Change Action Plan aligns with the Municipality's key strategies of Sustainable Infrastructure and Strong Communities.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

An amount of \$3,000 was included in the 2025/2026 draft budget towards engagement for this proposed project. The updated MCCAP may recommend future initiatives and projects that would be brought forward in future workplans/budgets.

Attachments

2013 Municipal Climate Change Action Plan for the Municipality of East Hants