




CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of Climate Change Initiatives

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 5, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2023 Priority Focus Areas for the Office of Climate Change Initiatives (PED23064) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Lynda Lukasik (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3169
SUBMITTED BY:	Lynda Lukasik Director, Climate Change Initiatives Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That, in addition to the various Climate Change related initiatives already contained within the 2023 workplans of multiple Divisions across the Corporation, the Priority Focus Areas for 2023 for the newly-created Office of Climate Change Initiatives, as summarized in Report PED23064 be received;
- (b) That the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development be authorized to approve expenditures up to \$250,000 from the Climate Change Reserve to fund projects and initiatives that implement or advance the Office of Climate Change Initiatives Priority Focus Areas summarized in Report PED23064, or projects and initiatives that implement or advance the City of Hamilton's Climate Change Strategy adopted by Council on August 12, 2022 through GIC Report 22-016 ((CM22016/PED22058(a)/HSC22030(a), and that the authorities within the Reserve Policy – Climate Change Reserve (Policy No. FPAP-RE-015) be amended accordingly;

- (c) That staff report back on progress toward each of the Office of Climate Change Initiatives Priority Focus Areas, including any funding commitments from the Climate Change Reserve as part of the annual Climate Change Strategy report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the initial 2023 priority focus areas for the newly created Office of Climate Change Initiatives (OCCI).

The City of Hamilton's Climate Change Strategy was adopted by Council on August 12, 2022 through GIC Report 22-016 ((CM22016/PED22058(a)/HSC22030(a). To implement that strategy, multiple Divisions across the Corporation have integrated climate change related initiatives into their 2023 workplans and budgets. This report summarizes the Priority Focus Areas for the newly-created Office of Climate Change Initiatives (OCCI). In addition to helping to support and coordinate the climate change initiatives across the corporation, the OCCI will be taking the lead with respect to various initiatives within these Priority Focus Areas. The 2023 Priority Focus Areas are organized under the following five themes:

- Climate Change Governance & Innovation
- Community Climate Outreach
- Carbon Budgeting
- Green Buildings
- Urban Greening

Given the urgency of advancing these initiatives, this report is also seeking delegated staff authority to access funding from the Climate Change Reserve to advance these projects.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Staff will report back annually on any expenditures resulting from the approval of this report. Any projects or initiatives with financial impacts beyond the delegated authorities set out in this report will be subject to future reports and Council approval.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with the approval of this report.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In August of 2022, City Council endorsed Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, including 'Recharge Hamilton – Our Community Energy & Emissions Plan' (CEEP) and the 'Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan' (CCIAP), through Report CM22016/PED22058(a)/HSC22030(a). Through that report, Council also approved the establishment of the Office of Climate Change Initiatives within the Planning and Economic Development Department and the creation of the role of the Director of Climate Change Initiatives.

In May of 2018 Council established a Climate Change Reserve through General Issues Committee Report 18-011. Council allocated \$1.5 M to the Climate Change Reserve through the Tax and Rate Operating Budgeting Variance Report as of December 31, 2020 and Budget Control Policy (Report FCS20069(b)). A Climate Change Reserve Policy was approved by Council in December 2021 through Report CMO19008(b)/HSC19073(b). The policy was established to guide the future spending of this reserve and was recognized as an important first step to providing the required funding for innovative climate change actions.

Most recently, as part of the 2023 Tax Supported Capital Budget, a 0.25% special levy (\$2.5M) was approved by Council in order to provide a sustainable funding source for the Climate Change Reserve.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not Applicable

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The City's Senior Leadership Team, through the Growth and Economic Development Working Group, was consulted in the preparation of this report.

Once the internal Climate Change Steering Committee and Community Climate Change Advisory Committee are established, staff will engage with those groups to inform any modifications to the 2023 Priority Focus Areas, and to inform the development of the 2024 priorities.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The climate emergency is arguably the greatest existential threat facing humanity. The 2023 Priority Focus Areas for the Office of Climate Change Initiatives represent a significant step forward in the implementation of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. Priorities are consistent with the Council-adopted strategy and were selected to quickly

initiate meaningful action and on-the-ground impact both within the corporation and in the community-at-large. These priorities represent initiatives that are not already covered in the mandates and workplans of other city divisions. Priorities also reflect community concerns and input heard by city staff through the consultation on the Climate Action Strategy, and subsequent outreach work by staff from the Office of Climate Change Initiatives. It is important to recognize that there are many other Climate Change related actions and initiatives – beyond the Priority Focus Areas for the OCCI - contained within the 2023 workplans of multiple divisions across the corporation.

The City of Hamilton declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 and the subsequent onset of the pandemic slowed efforts to finalize the Hamilton Climate Action Strategy and initiate expanded municipal efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This has only added to the urgency of advancing the Priority Focus Areas set out in this report and, combined with the fact that the climate crisis is an emergency, provides the rationale for the recommendations seeking approval for delegated staff authority to access funding from the Climate Change Reserve to advance these proposed OCCI Priority Focus Areas.

In developing the OCCI Priority Focus Areas, staff have identified both policy-focused initiatives designed to lay the foundation for long-term success, as well as short-term projects and initiatives that will demonstrate immediate impact and build momentum. The Hamilton Climate Action Strategy is an ambitious and comprehensive strategy that requires aggressive action across the community. The 2023 Priority Focus Areas represent a best effort at moving quickly on some key initial priorities while recognizing that there is much more still to be done in the future. The proposed Priority Focus Areas are detailed below.

2023 Priority Focus Areas for the Office of Climate Change Initiatives

The 2023 Priority Focus Areas for the OCCI are organized under five themes:

- Climate Change Governance & Innovation
- Community Climate Outreach
- Carbon Budgeting
- Green Buildings
- Urban Greening

Priority Focus Areas – Climate Change Governance & Innovation

A key component of the OCCI's 2023 workplan is the establishment of governance structures to guide the implementation of the Climate Action Strategy (CAS). The CAS sets out a framework that includes two internal committees – a Climate Change Initiatives Steering Committee and an Extended Leadership Committee, and an external

Community Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC). OCCI staff will provide support for the CCAC. The OCCI will also encourage and support municipal innovation on climate mitigation and adaptation.

The following will be Priority Focus Areas in 2023 for the OCCI with respect to Climate Change Governance & Innovation:

1. **Establishment of the City of Hamilton Climate Change Initiatives Steering Committee** – This is a critical piece of the necessary corporate governance structure. The Steering Committee will consist of Directors from key departments and divisions who will meet regularly to check in on progress and work collectively to ensure that necessary city targets and timelines for climate action are being met or exceeded.
2. **Establishment of City of Hamilton Climate Change Initiatives Extended Leadership Group** – The extended leadership group will consist of subject matter experts, typically at the manager or supervisor level, from key departments and divisions who are responsible for implementation of elements of the Climate Action Strategy.
3. **Recruiting and on-boarding of new OCCI staff** (Project Manager & Senior Project Manager) – Over the coming weeks, the OCCI will be hiring a Senior Project Manager who will play a lead role in the implementation of the home energy retrofit opportunity and other building performance initiatives, and a Project Manager to support the Community Climate Advisory Committee, and to help with broader community outreach and education, community partnerships, and general climate engagement work.
4. **Establishment of and support for the Community Climate Advisory Committee** – The Committee terms of reference have now been approved and the next step is to advertise and ultimately recruit committee members as part of the larger city process for filling advisory committee positions every term. Once established, the CCAC will be supported by staff in the OCCI.
5. **Facilitate and support municipal innovation on climate mitigation and adaptation** – OCCI staff will seek out opportunities to facilitate and support corporate innovation within the City of Hamilton where climate mitigation and adaptation are concerned. This could involve, for example, supporting a department's interest in piloting an EV version of a traditionally fossil fuel powered vehicle or piece of equipment, or supporting a pilot project designed to publicly demonstrate what climate resilient urban greening looks like. The OCCI will encourage and, where appropriate, offer financial supports through the Climate Change Reserve to make pilot efforts like this feasible.

Priority Focus Areas – Community Climate Outreach

When a Climate Emergency was declared by City Council in March of 2019, a commitment was made in that motion to the creation of an awareness campaign around the climate crisis and the need for action. The City of Hamilton has a leadership role to play as the administrator of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy and this includes ensuring Hamiltonians are aware of the strategy and understand the role they must also play in strategy implementation.

The following will be Priority Focus Areas in 2023 for the OCCI with regard to Community Climate Outreach:

6. **Development of a Climate Change Initiatives Communications Strategy** – OCCI staff will work with City Communications staff to develop a strategy for regular reporting and outreach on climate change initiatives. This will include good news stories from the City of Hamilton and other stakeholders, and ideas for hands-on actions that community members can take to contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation. The strategy will also include 'Climate 101' information, and basic information regarding Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy.
7. **Finalize agreement and partnership with the Bay Area Climate Change Council** – The Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC) engages diverse stakeholders across the cities of Hamilton and Burlington, facilitating effective collaboration for enhanced climate action. This is done in part through Bay Area Climate Change Implementation Teams or BACCITs made up of key stakeholders who work collectively to tackle key issues. The City of Hamilton provides support for operating costs for BACCC and the MOU guiding this support must be updated and reissued for 2023 and beyond.
8. **Finalize OCCI annual reporting format and methodology** – Tracking and reporting on progress with Climate Action Strategy implementation is a key role of the OCCI. The OCCI will report on progress across the corporation. Annual reporting must also be done in collaboration with the Community Climate Advisory Committee to ensure community-wide tracking of climate action. The first progress report to Council will occur in October of this year. OCCI staff will determine the best way to monitor and document progress and this will include consideration of a public-facing dashboard.

Priority Focus Areas – Carbon Budgeting

Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy identifies the need for a multi-pronged approach to 'carbon accounting' that includes carbon budgeting. Carbon budgets establish caps on how much a community can emit leading up to its target years for emission reductions.

The Finance Department has already initiated preliminary explorations into what would be required to develop a Carbon Budget for the City of Hamilton.

The following will be Priority Focus Areas in 2023 for the OCCI:

9. **Initiate creation of a Carbon Budget Framework** – During 2023, OCCI staff will facilitate research into best practices and collaborate with Finance to bring forward to Council a recommended framework that will be phased in for one or two City Divisions through the 2024 budget process and fully implemented across all City Divisions in the future.

Priority Focus Areas – Green Buildings

Buildings represent the third largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Hamilton. The City is well-positioned to expand the leadership already demonstrated by Facilities, the Office of Energy, and CityHousing Hamilton with its Passive House projects.

The following will be Priority Focus Areas in 2023 for the OCCI with respect to Green Buildings:

10. **Adopt an “Energy Performance/Net Zero” standard for all new municipal buildings** – The City can lead by example and reap the climate and financial benefits of adopting a net zero standard for all new municipal buildings. The OCCI will work in partnership with the city’s Office of Energy on the development of a Net Zero standard for all new municipal buildings. This standard will be the first step toward a green procurement strategy for Hamilton, providing guidance for all new city buildings, and supporting current efforts underway within the Office of Energy to create a pathway forward to realize net zero retrofits for all existing corporate facilities. The standard will also serve as helpful guidance for other stakeholders in the community who are eager to make their buildings climate resilient.
11. **Implement Home Energy Retrofit Opportunity (HERO) pilot residential program** – Retrofitting the existing residential building stock is important for achieving Hamilton’s climate targets. The HERO pilot will enable the OCCI to test the viability of a low interest loan program for residents as a method for facilitating home energy retrofits. The City enlisted the Mohawk Centre for Climate Change Management, with the support of a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to prepare a draft program design and implementation plan which is currently being reviewed by OCCI staff to determine next steps for pilot implementation in 2023.

Priority Focus Areas – Urban Greening

The OCCI will focus on facilitating urban greening in heavily urbanized areas that are currently dominated by hard surfaces and a subsequent lack of trees and other vegetation. This work will be pursued in order to facilitate the collective community goal of seeing 50,000 trees planted per year in Hamilton, and with the goal of equitable distribution of urban greening in order to realize the climate justice goals of the Climate Action Strategy. OCCI efforts will be developed in consultation with staff from Forestry & Horticulture to ensure that these urban greening efforts enhance but do not duplicate the important work Forestry already has underway.

The following will be Priority Focus Areas in 2023 for the OCCI with respect to Urban Greening:

12. **Facilitate implementation of enhanced urban greening initiatives** – The OCCI will coordinate with relevant City Departments and key community partners to amplify efforts to green up heavily urbanized areas through ‘depave’ projects and other innovative approaches to greening urban streetscapes and surrounding sites.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council may revise or choose not to adopt the Office of Climate Change Initiatives proposed 2023 Priority Focus Areas.

Council may revise or choose not to adopt the proposed funding model put forward to facilitate expedited implementation of climate actions.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

Culture and Diversity

Hamilton is a thriving, vibrant place for arts, culture, and heritage where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.