

Corporate Policy

Climate Change Adaptation Policy

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Department:	Infrastructure Services
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POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Orangeville recognizes their corporate responsibility to consider climate change in all relevant areas of Town business and decision-making processes.

PURPOSE

Establish a commitment to advancing climate change adaptation efforts across the corporation to manage, minimize or eliminate the local risks and impacts associated with climate change.

VISION

Climate change adaptation is integrated into Town plans, procedures and operations to ensure that Orangeville remains a resilient town, maintaining its values, character and charm.

INTRODUCTION

The projected changes in climate have the potential to profoundly impact the Town of Orangeville's assets, operations, and services. The risks associated with climate change highlight the requirement for effective adaptation through informed action and decision-making. Climate change adaptation requires an ongoing commitment, strong leadership to assess and sustain progress, adequate funding and meaningful engagement.

SCOPE

The impacts associated with climate change will affect multiple departments and divisions at the Town. To help overcome the challenges associated with climate change, actions to adapt and build climate resilience need to be implemented throughout the corporation. Therefore, this policy applies to all members of the Town's organization.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Words and phrases used in this Policy and related procedures have the following meanings, unless expressly stated otherwise:

“Adaptation” includes any initiatives or actions taken in response to actual or projected climate change impacts and which reduce the effects of climate change on built, natural and social systems.

“Adaptive capacity” is the ability of built, natural and social systems to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes), to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.

“Climate change” refers to a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer).

“Hazard” is the potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced physical event that may cause loss of life, injury, or other health impacts, as well as damage and loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, and environmental resources.

“Impact” refers to the effects of existing or forecasted changes in climate on built, natural, and human systems.

“Non-climatic stressor” is a change or trend unrelated to climate that can exacerbate hazards.

“Mal-adaptive actions” are actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased GHG emissions, increased vulnerability to climate change, or diminished welfare, now or in the future.

“Mitigation” includes the promotion of policy, regulatory and project-based measures that contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.

“Projections” are potential future climate conditions by computer-based models of the Earth system. Projections are based on sets of assumptions about the future.

“Resilience” is the capacity of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

“Risk” can be considered as the combination of an event, its likelihood and its consequences – risk equals the likelihood of a climate hazard multiplied by the consequence of that event.

“Sensitivity” is the degree to which a system, population or resource is or might be affected by hazards.

“Vulnerability” is the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of both the sensitivity and the adaptive capacity of a given system.

POLICY

1.1 Goals

This policy shall guide the Town of Orangeville’s ongoing commitment to climate change adaptation by establishing the following goals:

- Maintain levels of service that meet or exceed expectations set by Council despite changes in local climate;
- Increase climate resilience of Town assets, operations and service areas;

- Manage, minimize or eliminate local risks and impacts associated with climate change;
- Advance understanding and awareness of local climate change impacts and adaptation across the Town;
- Demonstrate accountability, transparency and fiscal responsibility throughout corporate adaptation efforts.

1.2 Actions

To work towards achieving the goals of this policy, the Town of Orangeville will:

- Integrate climate change adaptation into existing and future Town plans, procedures and operations where possible;
- Support the implementation of priority actions identified in the Corporate Climate Adaptation Plan;
- Identify existing and avoid future mal-adaptive actions throughout the corporation;
- Allocate adequate funding for prioritized adaptation measures;
- Commit to the ongoing monitoring of corporate adaptation measures and update as required.

1.3 Guiding Principles

The following statements will guide the Town of Orangeville in advancing climate change adaptation across the corporation:

- **Scientifically-based:** Ensure the Town is using the best available climate science to generate downscaled climate projections to inform adaptation planning.
- **Anticipatory Adaptation:** The Town will strive to plan and implement anticipatory adaptation measures to minimize risks and avoid community losses as opposed to reacting to impacts that have already been incurred.
- **No Regrets Adaptation:** When possible the Town will adopt adaptation measures that provide benefits regardless of future climate conditions. These options will increase resilience to the potential impacts of climate change while also yielding other economic, environmental, or social benefits.
- **Consultative and Collaborative:** A consultative and collaborative approach will ensure that adaptation efforts are reflective of both corporate and community priorities.
- **Recognize Complexity:** Cascading impacts and interdependencies amongst sectors and divisions and non-climatic stressors will be considered in adaptation planning.
- **Strategic Implementation:** Adaptation measures will be prioritized and implemented based on the severity of risk, committed levels of service and associated costs.
- **Adaptive Management:** Adaptation measures are intended to be regularly monitored and updated as new information and resources become available.
- **Mainstream Adaptation:** Promote and facilitate the incorporation of climate change information into Town business and operations.
- **Increase Awareness and Educate:** Increase awareness and understanding of local climate change impacts and adaptation among Town staff, Council members, external stakeholders and residents.
- **Best Practices:** Utilize best practices and lessons learned from surrounding municipalities on adaptation planning and implementation at the local level.