

GAINING TRACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE



Lana Hall

King Township is taking steps to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions across a number of sectors, including agriculture and transportation, as the community continues to see extreme weather wreaking havoc on its infrastructure and agricultural growing patterns.

At its meeting on September 9, **Township of King** council voted to receive a final draft of the King Community Climate Action Plan (KCCAP). The action plan offers a framework that provides information on the effects of climate change in King Township and outlines a series of actions that must

be taken to help adapt to and mitigate the most adverse effects of climate change.

Work on the KCCAP began in 2022, after King Township declared a climate emergency in 2019. At that time, Township staff outlined a goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 35 per cent by 2030, and achieve net-zero by 2050. The KCCAP was developed to meet those targets.

Like many communities in southern Ontario, King Township has seen an increase in the tangible effects of climate change, especially in the form of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, flooding, and ice storms, which can all result in costly infrastructure damage. As a heavily agricultural region—the township’s Holland Marsh is sometimes referred to as “the salad bowl” of Ontario—

these seasonal changes have altered agricultural growing patterns and crop yields for farmers, and heightened the risk of invasive species, says King Township environmental outreach and sustainability supervisor **Laura Campbell**.

The KCCAP focuses predominantly on actions designed to reduce the township’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These actions are broken down into sectors: residential, commercial/business & industrial, agricultural, transportation and municipal waste (both solid forms and wastewater). Within the plan, each of these sections contains information about its main sources of emissions, recommended action items for mitigating those emissions, a timeframe for implementing each action, funding level,

and potential roles for both the community and King Township in achieving those action items.

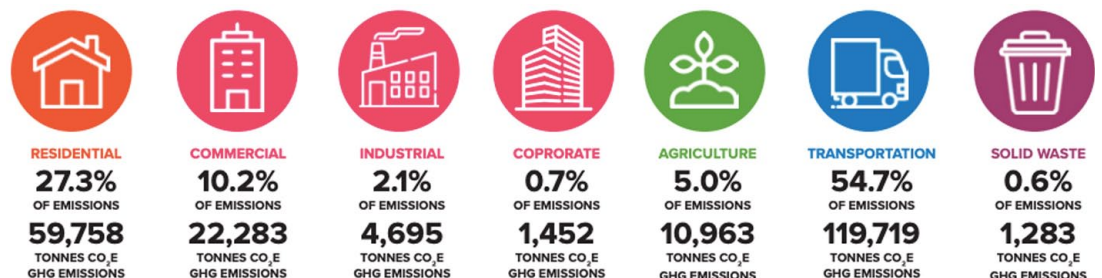
“The plan really provides staff with specific, measurable mitigation and adaptations that range from short to long-term deliverables,” Campbell told *NRU*. “The actions combined with the timeframes will provide a structured approach to assisting the community in reducing our GHG emissions and adapting to climate-related impacts and building resilience.”

In the transportation sector, for example, which makes up 54.7 per cent of the Township’s emissions—the highest percentage of all sectors—action items include installing an electric vehicle charging network throughout King municipal properties,

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Infographic highlighting greenhouse gas emissions for the year 2018 by sector in the Township of King. Earlier this month, Township council approved the King Community Climate Action Plan, a framework that provides information on the effects of climate change on King Township and outlines the different actions that must be taken to help adapt to and mitigate the impacts of its most adverse effects. These actions are broken down into sectors: residential, commercial/business & industrial, agricultural, transportation and municipal waste.

SOURCE: TOWNSHIP OF KING



GAINING TRACTION

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improving walking and cycling infrastructure across the township, and investing in anti-idling policies for drivers.

The residential sector makes up the second highest percentage of emissions across the Township, at 27.3 per cent. Action items in this category include protecting and restoring naturalized areas to provide diverse habitats, tree canopy, and to increase flood risk resilience. They also include investigating the feasibility of installing a community-wide district energy system, and providing toolkits to help homeowners transition their homes to net zero over time.

Though agriculture only makes up five per cent of the township's emissions, it too has a number of sector-specific action items within the KCCAP, mostly aimed at encouraging low-GHG energy alternatives on farms.

Campbell says the Township consulted with several demographic communities during the creation of the plan, including local agricultural producers and youth, to determine realistic action items for the various sectors. "I think we had over 1,000 touchpoints on the plan," she says.

The KCCAP will be formally evaluated every five years, with

annual progress updates posted online. Given the urgency of climate change, however, some wonder if more frequent evaluations would ensure the actions are having their desired effect.

"I just wonder if [2029] is not too far away, given that this is a new process that we've gone through," said Township of King ward 5 councillor **Debbie Schaefer**, speaking at the council meeting on September 9. "It strikes me as a very long time."

In response, Township of King director of community services **Chris Fasciano** explained that a five-year evaluation is on par with many other municipal plans, including the Township's master plan.

"To be completely blunt, once you get going on these, it takes a couple of years to gain traction," he said. "That's not to say that this plan isn't fluid, isn't a working document. There will be opportunities for alterations along the way if something isn't working." 🌸

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- Debbie Schaefer



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