

Partners for Climate Protection Program: Report from the Environmental Ad-Hoc Committee

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Acronyms / Abbreviations

- BARC: Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities
- EAC: Environmental Ad-Hoc Committee
- ESAC: Environmental Sustainability Ad-Hoc Committee
- FCM: Federal of Canadian Municipalities
- GHG: Greenhouse Gas
- GMF: Green Municipal Fund
- HICC: Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada
- MF: Milestone Framework
- PCP: Partners for Climate Protection

Context

EAC 2024 Terms of Reference

The Environmental Ad-Hoc Committee (EAC) was created to respond to the nine recommendations from the Environmental Stewardship Ad-Hoc Committee that were adopted by Council in March 2022. As per the Terms of Reference, the EAC must provide a report to Council with recommendations for achieving the below activities within 8 months of their first meeting. As related to this report, the EAC formed a sub-committee to, “Investigate the FCM-ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) Partners for Climate Program and report to Council on the merits of and requirements for participating in the Program.”

Programs

Partners for Climate Protection program

Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program is a national network of over 500 municipalities with the shared goal of taking action against climate change by reducing local greenhouse gas emissions. The program is primarily focused on climate mitigation, which means avoiding and reducing emissions of heat-trapping gases into the atmosphere to prevent further warming¹. Examples of mitigation include transitioning from fossil fuel-fired power to renewable energy, reducing energy demand through increased efficiency, restoring and maintaining natural habitats and forests that are carbon sinks, etc.

PCP membership is free and gives municipalities access to tools, networking venues, events, case studies and other informational resources. Members also have access to a PCP Hub which offers resources about local climate and energy initiatives, and provides a space for members to connect, ask questions about their mitigation activities, and share successes.

In 2022, the PCP network reached over 527 members, representing over 70% of the Canadian population, demonstrating the importance of participating in this initiative.

Quick facts about us

500+

Municipalities Participating

460+

Community and corporate reduction targets set

160+

Local climate change action plans implemented

Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities program

Many member municipalities have gone on to further their commitment to climate action by joining ICLEI’s Building Adaptive and Resilience Communities (BARC) program, which is

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<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/what-s-the-difference-between-climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation#:~:text=These%20terms%20go%20hand%2Din.warming%20to%20more%20extreme%20temperatures.>

focused on climate adaptation. Adaptation includes altering our behaviour, systems, and ways of life to protect ourselves, economies, and environments from the impacts of climate change. Examples of adaptation include ensuring infrastructure can withstand more extreme weather conditions, or planting new crop species that can thrive in a hotter and drier environment.

There is a \$20,000 fee to join BARC. **Because of this, the EAC recommends the Town of Saugeen Shores joins PCP first, to build momentum within the community on local climate action. Once there is momentum within the community, the municipality should move onto the BARC program soon thereafter, as there is greater funding available for municipalities with climate adaptation plans, and municipal insurance rates can be lowered by implementing climate adaptation measures.** Many municipalities start with mitigation initiatives, as they tend to be easier and less costly to implement than adaptation projects.

The PCP Milestone Framework

Municipalities in the PCP must move through a five-step Milestone Framework (MF) and set mid-term and long-term targets for GHG emissions reductions (Figure 1). Members must complete the MF within ten years of joining the program. All resources to move through the MF are provided by the program, so no municipality is on their own. **See a detailed chart for the PCP in Annex A.**

- **Milestone 1:** Create a baseline inventory of emissions, energy use, and energy spending. Forecast future energy demand trends in your community.
 - Municipalities can choose to focus on the community or the corporate sector. While the corporate sector only accounts for 2% of a municipality's energy use, on average, the data is often much easier to collect than the community sector, and is often recommended as a starting point for new members.
 - Our research shows that Saugeen Shores would already possess much of the data needed. The Energy Conservation and Demand Management Program from the previous provincial government was for municipalities to reduce emissions by 2% a year.
- **Milestone 2:** Determine emissions reduction targets, including a baseline year, a target year, and the percent change from the baseline year.
 - Council must adopt the resolution that sets these targets.
- **Milestone 3:** Develop a local climate change plan to describe how the municipality will achieve the emissions reduction targets.
 - This plan often includes stakeholder engagement and will require us to engage with the County of Bruce to ensure our initiatives align and are complementary.
 - The climate change plan describes costs for activities, potential funding sources, and the municipal departments that will implement the activities.

- **Milestone 4:** Implement the projects/activities outlined in the climate change plan
 - This milestone will include an implementation schedule and must link to the municipal budget.
- **Milestone 5:** Monitor the progress of the projects and report on the GHGs reduced from each measure.
 - Note that monitoring and reporting typically occurs just once in the PCP program.



Figure 1: Five-step Milestone Framework.

Joining the PCP

The PCP is free for municipalities to join. The requirements to join are:

- Submitting a joining resolution from Council (see Annex B);
- Appointing one staff member and one elected official to be the main PCP contacts.
- Moving through the MF within 10 years of joining.
- Reporting on progress at least once every two years.
- Emailing PCP with updated contact information (as necessary)
- Actively participating in program activities and sharing our experience with other members

When you join PCP, you get access to a library of resources from PCP to support municipalities in moving through each Milestone, as well as access to staff support from PCP. For example, PCP has an online calculator that computes GHG emissions.

Costs and Funding

There are several municipalities around Saugeen Shores that have joined the PCP and are at various stages of progress, as identified in Figure 2. Members include two municipalities in Bruce County (Huron-Kinloss and North Bruce Peninsula) and nine municipalities in Grey County (City of Owen Sound, Town of Georgian Bluffs, and others). Contacts in these municipalities have proven to be helpful resources in guiding Saugeen Shores through the process of gathering the information presented in this report, and will be a continued resource for the municipality.

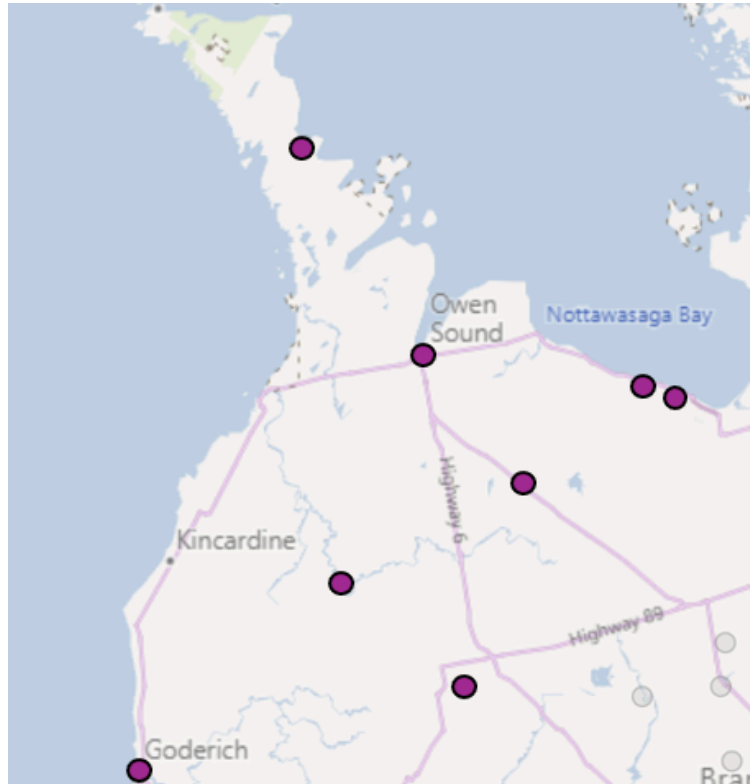


Figure 2: Municipalities (denoted by purple dots) in Bruce, Grey, and Huron Counties who are members of PCP.

Based on our research and discussions with these municipalities, the costs to complete Milestones 1 and 2 could range from \$25,000 to \$35,000 for internal staff to compute GHG emissions data and set benchmarks for the municipality. Much of the work in these Milestones is aided by the resources offered by PCP and ICLEI. These figures are subject to change based on the position of the individual within the municipality. However, contracting this work to an external party is also an option, though the costs are significantly higher, in the range of \$75,000 to \$100,000 to complete Milestones 1 and 2.

For Milestone 3, developing a climate change plan, neighbouring municipalities mentioned they applied for grants around \$300,000 with the expectation that if they are approved, the

municipality would have to inject around \$100,000 (or 25% of total project costs) of their own funds.

There are many federal and provincial funding programs available for municipalities to complete climate mitigation projects, including energy efficiency assessments, electric vehicle chargers, tree planting, etc. The grant ecosystem changes often, so specific options are not presented in this report, but some research into the main funding agencies such as the Green Municipal Fund and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC), can easily be done to find current options.

It is important to note that future funding opportunities may only be available if a municipality has a climate change plan. For example, in June 2024, the Green Municipal Fund was awarded \$530 million to support community-led climate adaptation initiatives, a key initiative under Canada's National Adaptation Strategy². **The Local Communities for Climate Action funding program, offered by the GMF, is open to municipalities that have completed climate adaptation plans and/or climate risk assessments.** The EAC predicts that additional funding opportunities will similarly require applicants to have climate mitigation and/or adaptation plans in place.

Rationale

³The Government of Canada's National Adaptation Strategy (and associated Adaptation Action Plan), makes clear the importance of taking action against climate change now to prevent greater costs in the future. **Research suggests that every \$1 invested in prevention and preparation can save up to \$15 in future costs**⁴. For example, this could include investing in more urban forests to improve air quality, support stormwater infrastructure, and keep cities and towns cooler. While joining PCP would not necessarily start adaptation activities, it would ensure the right resources are in place for the Town to enrol in the BARC program when it is ready.

In recent years, municipal insurance rates have increased sharply. One of the commonly identified drivers of escalating claims costs is the effects of climate change on municipal infrastructure. A paper published in 2022 by Intact Insurance Public Entities states outright that "municipalities must pivot to climate adaptation". Similarly, a publication of AMCTO (Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario) discussing rising

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2024/06/building-stronger-more-climate-resilient-communities-the-government-of-canada-provides-530-million-to-municipalities-through-the-green-municipal-fund.html>

3

https://www.intactpublicentities.ca/storage/media/files/News/Escalating_Cost_of_Municipal_Claims_2022.pdf, p. 5

4

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/national-adaptation-strategy/action-plan.html>

municipal insurance rates identifies climate change as a significant driver, and recommends that the Province support municipalities by increasing investment to ensure municipal infrastructure is climate-resilient.⁵ Both of these sources identify climate-adaptation risk management as a step municipalities can take to lower their number of claims and insurance rates.

Next Steps

The Town of Saugeen Shores is already advancing many important projects and plans whose activities could be included as climate mitigation measures, such as tree planting, maintenance and conservation measures proposed in the Urban Tree Canopy Plan and recommendations set out in the Town Master Drainage Plan. The Town already has in place some of the resources and structures that would be required under the PCP. Joining the PCP would provide the Town with access to a bank of resources, engaged partners, calculators, example climate change plans, etc. that would all support the Town in moving through the five-step Milestone Framework. Once the activities in the PCP are sufficiently underway, the Town would be well-positioned to join BARC and gain access to additional resources and funding opportunities to continue creating positive change in Saugeen Shores.

Resources

In addition to the resources offered by ICLEI Canada and the PCP, there are many other resources about climate mitigation and adaptation activities for municipalities:

- [Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation](#)
- [Canadian Climate Institute - Mitigation](#)
- [Climate Atlas of Canada](#)

⁵ https://www.amcto.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/19-Issue-at-a-Glance_Municipal-Insurance.pdf

Annex A

Milestone	Description	Estimated cost	Funding available	Estimated time to complete
Milestone 1	Create a baseline inventory of emissions, energy use, and energy spending	\$25,000 to \$30,000 for internal resources. Up to \$100,000 to contract the activities.	No external funding would be needed. The Town has access to the information required to complete these milestones, and would also have access to tools from PCP.	One to two years
Milestone 2	Determine emissions reduction targets			
Milestone 3	Develop a local climate change plan to achieve emissions targets	Creating a climate change plan, with support from a consultant, could cost up to \$300,000. Municipality could be expected to contribute 25% of total project costs.	Through joining PCP, the Town would gain access to other climate change plans and other municipalities to ask about their process and costing.	One to two years
Milestone 4	Implement the activities outlined in the plan	Costs would depend on the measures proposed and could range from the tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Municipality could be expected to	Various grant funding opportunities are available for implementation ⁶ .	Three to five years. Completion of activities will occur on different time scales and will also be affected by availability and timing of grant

⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/adapting/funding.html>

		contribute a portion of total project costs, depending on the funding program.		funding.
Milestone 5	Monitor the progress of the activities and report of GHGs reduced	Would require internal resources for monitoring and reporting.	No funding programs available for monitoring and reporting specifically. These activities would be included in any funding obtained for Milestone 4.	Ongoing

Annex B

Council Resolution to Join the FCM–ICLEI Partners for Climate Protection Program

WHEREAS The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI Canada) have established the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program to provide a forum for municipal governments to share their knowledge and experience with other municipal governments on how to reduce GHG emissions;

WHEREAS over 350 municipal governments across Canada representing more than 65 per cent of the population have already committed to reducing corporate and community GHG emissions through the PCP program since its inception in 1994;

WHEREAS the PCP program is based on a five-milestone framework that involves completing a GHG inventory and forecast, setting a GHG reduction target, developing a local action plan, implementing the plan, and monitoring progress and reporting results;

BE IT RESOLVED that the municipality of _____ review the guidelines on PCP Member Benefits and Responsibilities and then communicate to FCM and ICLEI Canada its participation in the PCP program and its commitment to achieving the milestones set out in the PCP five-milestone framework;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the municipality of _____ appoint the following:

- a) Corporate staff person (Name) _____
(Job Title) _____
(Contact number) _____
(Email address) _____
- b) Elected official (Name) _____
(Job Title) _____
(Contact number) _____
(Email address) _____

to oversee implementation of the PCP milestones and be the points of contact for the PCP program within the municipality.

Signature

Date

PCP Member Benefits and Responsibilities

The PCP program offers you a proven approach to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and the support you need to achieve success. Being actively engaged in the PCP program gives your municipality the chance to become a leader by taking systematic and organized action on climate change. By participating in the PCP program, Canadian municipalities gain access to the following tools and resources:

- Support and guidance, through the PCP Milestone Framework, to help members reduce GHG emissions.
- Access via the PCP Hub to a network of over 350 local governments across Canada that are taking action on climate change and can help your community succeed by offering their experience and examples.
- Technical support tools, including the PCP Milestone Tool and PCP Protocol.
- Information and access to funding opportunities, such as those offered by FCM's Green Municipal Fund.
- Capacity-building resources, including workshops, case studies and training opportunities.
- Awards and recognition for milestone achievements and for reported measures.

Members of the PCP program have the following responsibilities:

- Move through the Milestone Framework within 10 years of joining
- Report on progress at least once every two years, with our support
- Email us if your contact information changes
- Actively participate in program activities and share your experience with other network members

If your municipality is not able to meet the PCP program requirements, you can always leave the program and rejoin it at a later date. You can also contact the PCP Secretariat anytime for help with submitting documentation to meet the requirements.

Supporting Rationale for Consideration

It is well established that climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events and posing other risks, such as drought, forest fires and rising sea levels, which present serious threats to our natural environment, our health, our jobs and our economy.

The 2016 Paris Agreement, signed by more than 190 countries, including Canada, committed to limit the global temperature increase to below two degrees Celsius and to pursue efforts to limit this increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, in order to avoid the most severe climate change impacts.

Local governments are essential to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Canada's cities and communities influence approximately 50 per cent of national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and can drive systemic low-carbon practices, including: building high-efficiency buildings, undertaking building retrofits and developing district heating; building active transit, electric vehicle infrastructure and electrified public transit; implementing near-zero GHG waste plans; and delivering high-efficiency water and wastewater services.

Investments in these types of measures also reduce operating costs, help municipalities maintain and plan for future community services, protect public health, support sustainable community development, increase community resilience and reduce a community's vulnerability to environmental, economic and social stresses.

A number of government and international and national organizations have called for greater cooperation among all stakeholders to meet reduction targets, including Canada's Big City Mayors' Caucus, which supports binding GHG emission reduction targets at the international, national and city levels, action plans that cut emissions, identification of risks and mitigation solutions, and regular municipal GHG emissions reporting.