

To:	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	September 12, 2024
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CW-20-24
Title:	Initiating Grey County's Climate Adaptation Plan
Prepared by:	Rebecca Danard
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-CW-20-24 be received, providing an update on the Climate Adaptation Plan project which was identified as a priority in Going Green in Grey and the Corporate Strategic Plan; and
2. That Grey County purchase a core Building Adaptive Resilient Communities (BARC) membership and facilitation package in the amount of \$29,800 from ICLEI Canada which will provide coaching and facilitation support in helping the County to develop the Climate Adaptation Plan, using the funds included in the 2024 Climate Change Budget; and
3. That Grey County apply for Local Leadership in Climate Adaptation program from FCM to further support the development, implementation and monitoring of the Climate Adaptation Plan should the terms of the funding permit.

Executive Summary

Creating a Climate Adaptation Plan was identified as a priority in Going Green in Grey as well as Grey County's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. This report outlines the recommended approach to creating this plan as well as the resources available to support it which includes initial funds in the 2024 Budget as well as potentially applying for FCM Funding to further support the development, implementation and monitoring of the plan. Creating a Climate Adaptation Plan that considers both corporate and community needs would address the built environment, natural assets, and socio-economic impacts of climate change. It would bring together previous work by other local organizations, fill any gaps, and identify corporate and community adaptation actions. Staff recommend using ICLEI Canada's Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) framework to complete the plan, a process that has been used by over 120 Canadian municipalities, including the Township of Georgian Bluffs, and the City of Owen Sound for their corporate adaptation plans.

Grey County is already participating in Ontario Resource Center for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) Community Outreach & Engagement Program to form a working group of internal and external partners and host an impact identification workshop. Staff recommend purchasing a core BARC membership and facilitation package from ICLEI Canada to provide staff with the necessary support for the next part of the process which includes a vulnerability and risk assessment and creating a Climate Adaptation Plan.

FCM is launching the Local Leadership in Climate Adaptation funding for planning in fall 2024. Staff recommend applying for this funding to support completion and to support implementation of the plan. No additional funding is requested at this time. Funding from the Climate Change operating budget, the Climate Action Outreach capital budget, and the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget will be used for the BARC membership. The majority of the funds remaining in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget as well as funds from the Nature Based Climate Action capital budget will be used to leverage FCM funding.

Background and Discussion

Grey County's Climate Adaptation Plan

"Going Green in Grey" focuses on climate mitigation – reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering carbon to slow the progress of climate change. A Climate Adaptation Plan outlines how our community will respond to the impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing, and we predict will continue to increase in the future. Developing a Climate Adaptation Plan was identified as a priority in "Going Green in Grey" as well as Grey County's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. In April 2024, staff updated Council on the climate adaptation planning process, including participating in ORCCA's Outreach and Engagement program. This report is attached for convenience.

Community-Based Approach

Staff recommend using ICLEI's BARC Milestone process to create Grey County's Climate Adaptation Plan. This process can be used to plan for either a corporate or community plan. Just as Going Green in Grey addresses both corporate and community assets, staff recommend that the Climate Adaptation Plan include both in the scope of work to best support member municipalities by allowing them to focus on their corporate assets from a climate adaptation perspective. The Township of Georgian Bluffs and the City of Owen Sound have developed corporate adaptation plans. Other organizations (e.g. Brightshores Health System, Grey Bruce Public Health) are working on adaptation actions that address their organization and mandate. However, thus far, there is no comprehensive strategy that addresses the built environment, natural assets, and socio-economic impacts of climate change and outlines community-based actions related to climate adaptation across Grey. Grey County is well positioned to lead the creation of such a plan.

Residents rely on a web of infrastructure and services managed by other organizations: member municipalities, conservation authorities, public health, Indigenous and social service groups. Although staff have more control over corporate assets, the community climate risks need to be assessed and managed as well. As with "Going Green in Grey", the Climate Adaptation Plan will need enthusiastic and committed partners at the table to implement it.

Involving these partners in creating the plan will build buy-in and smooth the path to implementation.

Resources Available

There are several resources that Grey County can leverage in creating the Climate Adaptation Plan.

ORCCA Outreach and Engagement Capacity Building Program

The ORCCA (Ontario Resource Center for Climate Adaptation) Community Outreach & Engagement Program provides cohort-style learning and capacity support for Ontario communities working on an adaptation-focused engagement initiative. It is a project of ICLEI Canada who were instrumental in helping the County to develop “Going Green in Grey.” Grey County submitted a project application to ORCCA and they accepted our project. Over the course of one-year (March 2024 – February 2025), Grey County will receive support at no cost to the County from ORCCA team members including capacity building, subject matter experts, workshops and lecture-style presentations, tools and resources, connections and networking. More information is available in the report mentioned above.

Thus far staff have identified internal and external stakeholders, drafted a terms of reference, work plan, and sent invitations to a working group to participate in approximately five workshops over the next 16 months. The working group includes confirmed representation from:

- Grey County Planning, Community Services, Transportation, and Asset Management
- Member municipalities
- Grey Bruce Public Health
- Grey Sauble, Saugeen Valley, Nottawasaga Valley, Grand River Conservation Authorities
- Local utilities (Enbridge and Hydro One)
- Grey Agricultural Services
- United Way Grey Bruce
- Indigenous groups (M'WIKwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre and Bagida'waad Alliance)

Staff are anticipating a Climate Science Report (prepared by the ORCCA Help Desk) in late September. In early October they will support staff to host the first workshop about Impact Identification. Time permitting, they will help staff to develop a communication and an engagement plan for the project.

FCM Local Leadership in Climate Adaptation Funding

Through the Green Municipal Fund, FCM is providing support for municipalities for Climate-Ready Plans and Processes. This funding is to support the integration of equitable and inclusive climate resilience into municipal plans, processes and management systems, such as asset management systems planning. The specifics of this funding will be announced in Fall 2024. Staff do not yet have details about application requirements and deadlines, anticipated funding announcement dates, maximum funding amounts, percentage matching funding needed, length of project, or eligible expenses and activities. Staff can make some educated guesses based on

other FCM funding programs but until the funding is announced staff have no confirmed information.

The Gaps Challenge

The challenge is that there is additional work needed before FCM funding is available, that is not included in the ORCCA program. To advance this Adaptation Plan project and make best use of the ORCCA program as well as maintaining the momentum achieved through the ORCCA program, staff require additional support for completing post-workshop data analysis, impact statements, the vulnerability survey, and the risk and vulnerability report. Ideally this work would take place in Fall 2024-Spring 2025; this is before staff could reasonably expect to hear if Grey County will receive FCM funding.

Given the uncertainties of the FCM funding, staff do not recommend relying on it to complete the Climate Adaptation Plan. Should our application be successful, FCM funding would support staff time and professional services to further advance the implementation and monitoring of the Climate Adaptation Plan (BARC Milestones 4 and 5). Activities could include a “cost of doing nothing” report, flood prone and critical infrastructure mapping, a natural asset inventory, a resilient homes plan, or designing a resilient agriculture program. Exact activities will depend on the funding parameters and priorities identified earlier in the adaptation planning process.

Recommended Approach

Staff considered several alternatives to address this challenge including pausing the project, a purely staff-led approach (which would require delaying certain projects and initiatives) and engaging a third-party consultant. The recommended solution is to purchase a core BARC membership and facilitation package, using funds within the 2024 Climate Change Budget, to support staff through the creation of a Climate Adaptation Plan. Supports include:

- Dedicated ICLEI liaison for technical, strategic, and methodological support over a 12 to 16-month period
- Research assistance – refining impact statements (identifying any gaps or omissions), refining impacted sectors, and refining the vulnerability and risk assessments.
- Preparation and in-person facilitation of up to 5 local meetings.
- Expert input from various sectors and regions (e.g. engineering, planning, etc.)
- Adaptation planning guidance – setting vision statements, identifying goals and objectives, identifying targets and baseline information, brainstorming actions and policies, refining actions, and performance metrics
- Implementation assistance – identifying partners for implementation, development of implementation schedules, and identifying implementation tools.
- Monitoring and Evaluation – considerations of what to track progress on (by setting indicators or other performance metrics – as well as the baseline information needed - for each action) and details as to the frequency at which indicators should be tracked as well as parameters for evaluation of the plan
- Progress updates and regular check-ins
- Full and unlimited access to BARC Tool

Purchasing the core BARC membership and facilitation package would maintain the current momentum and allow staff to use the resources through the ORCCA process that we have access to until February 2025. With the coaching and support from the BARC membership and existing staff resources, Grey County will have a viable Climate Adaptation Plan (BARC Milestone 3) by the end of 2025, even if the FCM application is unsuccessful or the funding criteria does not meet Grey County’s needs. ORCCA is run by ICLEI staff, so there is synergy and communication between the two programs. Other upper-tier Ontario municipalities have done this process including Dufferin County, Waterloo Regional Municipality, the Regional Municipality of Durham and the District of Muskoka. ICLEI Canada is the only organization that provide this coaching service.

Workplan Summary

Program	BARC Milestones	Timeframe
ORCCA Outreach & Engagement Program and Helpdesk	Milestone 1: Initiate Milestone 2: Research (partial)	March 2024 – February 2025
ICLEI BARC Membership	Milestones 1: Initiate Milestone 2: Research (completed) Milestone 3: Plan	September 2024 – December 2025
Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (FCM funding)	Milestone 3: Plan Milestone 4: Implement Milestone 5: Monitor/Review	Funding launches Fall 2024. Expecting results Spring 2025. Timeframe of the project TBD – anticipating 12-36 months.

A more detailed workplan is available in the attached working group Terms of Reference.

Financial and Resource Implications

This project can be completed with existing staff and budget resources.

Part 1: Before/Without FCM funding

The ORCCA Outreach and Engagement Program is free. Grey County climate team staff time is supporting this project.

The total cost for the BARC membership, facilitation and travel is \$29,800. Staff have budgeted an additional \$2,000 for 2 workshops that will occur before FCM funding is available. This brings the total initial program cost to \$31,800. This funding will come from the climate action operations budget (\$14,400), the Climate Action Outreach capital budget (\$9,200) and the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget (\$8,200).

The BARC process requires 0.25 FTE to achieve Milestones 1-3. Work will be divided between the Climate Change Outreach and Engagement Coordinator and the Climate Change Initiatives Manager.

If the FCM funding is unsuccessful, an additional \$3000 would be needed to cover the remaining workshops in BARC Milestones 2 and 3. These expenses would be covered by the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget. The funds remaining in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget (\$38,800) would no longer be needed as matching funds and would be spent to begin implementing the actions identified in the plan.

Part 2: FCM Application

Staff recommend using the Climate Change Adaption Plan capital budget to provide the matching funds for an the FCM application. The other stream of adaptation funding from FCM has a baseline formula for 60% of eligible costs paid by FCM and 40% paid by the applicant. If the same formula is used for this funding, an investment of \$50,000 from Grey County would be matched by a \$75,000 contribution from FCM, for a total project of \$125,000. Grey County's contribution would come from the Climate Change Adaptation Plan capital budget (\$41,800) and the Nature Based Climate Action capital budget (\$8,200) which aligns with the adaptation plan work.

The FCM funding would provide resources to support Milestones 3-5 of the BARC process. While no additional funding is needed for ICLEI, staff time and meeting expenses will likely be eligible, so the funding can support completing the Climate Adaptation Plan. The funding could also support staff time and professional services for implementation and monitoring after the Climate Adaptation Plan has been created.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal
 - AODA Compliance (describe)
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets: Action 16: Climate Adaptation Plan
- External

Appendices and Attachments

Climate Change Initiatives Update April 2024

CAOR-CW-20-24 Draft Terms of Reference Climate Adaptation WG