

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. SI-2025-0008

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

June 4, 2025

SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

1. RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council receive Report No. SI-2025-0008, prepared by the Corporate Strategy and Transformation Division, Strategic Initiatives Department dated June 4, 2025 respecting the Climate Change Action Plan;
2. That Council endorse in principle the Climate Action Plan (attachment 1); and
3. That the implementation of the Climate Action Plan be subject to the annual business planning and budget approval process.

2. PURPOSE:

This report presents the Town of Georgina's Climate Change Action Plan for Council endorsement. The plan describes Georgina's six priority objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation, summarizes the actions the Town and community partners have already taken to address these priorities, and outlines the recommended new or enhanced actions for the next five years.

3. BACKGROUND:

A Climate Change Action Plan was identified as a priority initiative in the 2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan. The development of the plan was approved through the 2024 budget to strengthen community well-being and resilience, identify cost-saving and innovative opportunities, secure additional grant funding, enhance community engagement, and strengthen partnerships.

Between March 2024 and June 2025, staff developed Georgina's Climate Action Plan. It was developed in five phases outlined below:

- **Phase 1: Project Planning** (March – April 2024).
 - Project planning documents and kick-off presentations were completed.
- **Phase 2: Background Research** (May – June 2024)
 - Environmental scans, hazard projections and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses were compiled.
- **Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement** (July – August 2024)
 - Public and staff surveys were conducted, and feedback gathered at community events.
- **Phase 4: Risk Prioritization** (September – November 2024)
 - Climate risks were prioritized using a matrix based on data from phases two and three.
- **Phase 5: Action Plan Development:** (December 2024 – June 2025)
 - Climate actions for the priority risks were assessed for impact and feasibility of implementation.

A report was brought to Council in November 2024 that outlined the prioritized risks and greenhouse gas inventories from phases one to four:

1. Extreme heat is a very high risk – by 2050, the number of days over 30 degrees Celsius is projected to increase from an average of 9 days per year to an average of 35 days, particularly impacting vulnerable population, the electricity grid, agriculture, wetlands, and summer recreation and tourism.
2. Nutrient loading in Lake Simcoe is a very high risk – by 2050, phosphorus and salt levels in the lake will likely increase, particularly impacting the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, coldwater fish, insects, and amphibians, and summer recreation and tourism.
3. Warmer and rainier winters is a high risk – by 2050, projections show there will be as much rain as snow in winter and less lake ice, particularly impacting the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, first responders, agriculture, wetlands, winter recreation and tourism, and electrical utilities.
4. Extreme one-day storms is a moderate risk – by 2050, the volume of rain during one-day storms will increase by 23 per cent, particularly impacting agriculture, sports and recreation fields, and stormwater and road infrastructure.
5. Corporate greenhouse gas emissions account for approximately 2,100 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year, mainly from buildings (52 percent) and fleet vehicles (39 percent)
6. Community greenhouse gas emissions account for approximately 380,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year, mainly from transportation (68 percent) and buildings (26 percent)

4. ANALYSIS:

Based on the risk analysis and greenhouse gas inventories, four climate adaptation objectives and two climate mitigation objectives were identified to address the top climate risks and opportunities:

Objectives:

1. Protect vulnerable people and promote safe summer recreation during extreme heat
2. Reduce Lake Simcoe nutrient loading for continued use and enjoyment
3. Protect vulnerable people and adapt winter recreation to warmer and rainier winters
4. Ensure infrastructure and lands can handle more intense one-day storms
5. Reduce corporate greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from buildings
6. Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from transportation

The plan describes the actions that the Town and community are already taking to address these objectives and outlines the new or enhanced actions to take within the next five years. The new or enhanced actions are listed below:

Objective 1: Protect vulnerable people and promote safe summer recreation during extreme heat

Recommended actions:

- Advocate for expanded on-demand public transit options and continue to promote existing options
- Advocate for air conditioning in schools
- Develop and share tip sheet on pet safety during extreme heat tip sheet
- In partnership with LSRCA, ensure tree species planting list is climate resilient
- Ensure attendees at Town-run summer events have access to shading and cooling
- Increase shade at beaches and parks (tree canopy and/or shade structures) to encourage safe use during extreme heat
- Diversify activities at waterfront parks to attract visitors in extreme heat or poor lake quality conditions
- Investigate adding “Rural Resiliency” stream to Community Improvement Plan to support agri-tourism all year round
- Retrofit lighting at applicable fields and diamonds to extend play during evenings when temperature is cooler

Objective 2: Reduce Lake Simcoe nutrient loading for continued use and enjoyment

Recommended actions:

- Create a "Love our Lake" campaign to promote responsible resident and visitor practices to protect lake health and support climate action
- Advocate for more provincial and federal funding, support, and coordinated action for Lake Simcoe in partnership with Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and regional coalitions
- Share resources and explore partnerships on lake-related conservation projects with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
- Partner with local organizations to host community shoreline and beach clean-ups
- Update and implement Salt Management Plan
- Update septic maintenance inspection program to encourage maintenance best practices
- Incorporate Low Impact Development (e.g. bioswales) when expanding or rehabilitating stormwater infrastructure and roads where topographically feasible due to groundwater levels
- Promote third-party environment-related funding programs and resources available for farmers

Objective 3: Protect vulnerable people and adapt winter recreation to warmer and rainier winters

Recommended action:

- Diversify outdoor activities for years of warm winter conditions

Objective 4: Ensure infrastructure and lands can handle more intense one-day storms

Recommended actions:

- Identify parks with persistently poor drainage and re-naturalize priority areas
- Share information and resources to help residents reduce flood risk at home
- Enhance maintenance and cleaning of ditches, culverts, and stormwater management ponds

Objective 5: Reduce corporate greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from buildings

Recommended actions:

- Develop a plan to strategically plant trees and vegetation in priority locations
- Provide resources and education about sustainable product and material options for procurement
- Monitor and communicate staff driver behaviour statistics to promote fuel efficiency
- Evaluate Net Zero Ready option in the design of new corporate buildings
- Consider options for more energy efficient (including electric) models (rather than like-for-like replacement) for building retrofits and equipment upgrades

- Perform energy efficiency assessments on buildings with greatest absolute emissions or intensity; and implement improvements (e.g. building commissioning, retrofits, etc.)

Objective 6: Reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from transportation

Recommended actions:

- Promote third-party grants and programs available for small business and Industrial Commercial and Institutional energy retrofits (e.g. Save on Energy program)
- Add "Green Business Leader" award to Business Excellence and Mayor and Council Milestone Awards
- Promote third-party grants and programs available for residential energy and water retrofits and initiatives (e.g. York Region pilot, Save on Energy, HERO workshop etc.)
- Encourage carpooling (use of 404 Go Transit Lot or digital platforms)
- Advocate for electric vehicle readiness in Ontario Building Code for commercial and residential buildings
- Explore electric vehicle infrastructure requirements for parking lots through Parking Study Review
- Encourage builders to include electric vehicle readiness as option in sales packages
- Encourage electric vehicle charging infrastructure in industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI) development through site plan approval process
- Encourage mixed-use neighbourhoods in all Secondary Plans
- Encourage more compact development through incentive programs (as available), streamlined application processes, and policies
- Create and implement Waste Management Plan
- Partner with local non-profits on tree planting and native restoration initiatives, prioritizing areas near watercourses or sloped grassy areas
- Promote legacy programs to encourage residents to contribute to community tree plantings

To address climate change more holistically across departments, the following actions are also recommended:

- Collaborate cross-departmentally to incorporate climate considerations in plans, policies, and projects
- Join municipal networks for learning and collaboration (e.g. Partners for Climate Protection, Clean Air Partnership)
- Include CCAP into Terms of Reference for Environmental Advisory Committee

While these actions can be delivered in the next five years, the plan also includes more ambitious or capital-intensive future considerations to address the objectives beyond 2030.

Following Council endorsement, staff will begin implementing the Climate Change Action Plan, with actions that require additional resources to be brought forward through the annual budgeting process for approval. Staff will report annually on the key indicators and share success stories and opportunities for engagement throughout the year. The plan is intended to be a living document that can be adapted and expanded to take advantage of partnership, funding, or other opportunities as they emerge.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The initiative supports the 2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan:

Pillar	Advancing Environmental Sustainability
Goal	Support Georgina's resilience through environmental sustainability and climate mitigation and adaptation
Initiative	Develop Climate Change Action Plan to define a path forward for the Town that focuses on high value initiatives

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The Climate Change Action Plan project budget was approved in business case 24-CI-SI-02 for the amount of \$250,000. The projected spend for the plan development (up to June 30, 2025) is \$114,350.

In terms of the budgetary impact for the plan implementation, some actions in the Climate Action Plan can be delivered with existing resources, while others require additional resources, which would be subject to the annual budget process.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

During the plan development, the project team received input from more than 600 stakeholders, representing residents, local businesses, Town staff, non-profit organizations and other key partners. These included 300 in-person interactions at public events, 211 public survey responses, and 30 youth engaged. Further details of the engagement methods and results can be found in Attachment 1.

8. CONCLUSION:

The Town of Georgina has developed a tailored Climate Action Plan to address the priority climate risks and opportunities in Georgina. The objectives include adapting to extreme heat, reducing nutrient loading in Lake Simcoe, adapting to warmer and rainier winters, adapting to more extreme one-day storms, and reducing corporate and community greenhouse gas emissions.

The plan highlights the actions that the Town and community are already taking to address these priorities and outlines the new and enhanced actions to continue strengthening community resilience and safety.

The implementation of the Climate Action Plan be subject to the annual business planning and budget approval process. Staff will report to Council annually on progress and communicate regularly with the Georgina Environmental Advisory Committee and community on how they can get involved in taking climate action.

APPROVALS

Prepared By:	Stephanie Wolfe Climate Initiatives Lead
Reviewed By:	Neil Comer Climate Initiatives Advisor
Reviewed By:	Simone Lopreiato-Weinstein Program Manager
Reviewed By:	Olga Lawton Manager, Corporate Strategy and Transformation
Recommended By:	Shawn Nastke Director, Strategic Initiatives
Recommended By:	Rob Wheeler Deputy CAO/Treasurer
Approved By:	Ryan Cronsberry Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Climate Action Plan