



REGION OF WATERLOO

CORPORATE RESOURCES Facilities Management and Fleet Services

TO: Chair Tom Galloway and Members of the Administration and Finance Committee

DATE: February 15, 2011

FILE CODE: D06-80

**SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT:
2009-2010**

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.

REPORT:

The Region's Environmental Sustainability Strategy was approved by Council in May 2009. Since then progress has been made on a number of components from the Strategy's implementation plan. This report provides a summary overview of this progress and identifies some of the major actions planned in the 2011-2012 timeframe pending budget approval.

Progress on implementation plan

The primary goal of the Sustainability Strategy, as identified in the Region's Environmental Policy, is to incorporate environmental considerations in our decision-making and to foster community stewardship of the natural environment. A five year implementation plan within the Strategy outlined how staff would integrate the Environmental Strategic Framework across all Regional operations, programs and services. The following list is a summary of achievements to date.

➤ **Strategy Promotion**

Corporate:

- promotion to all levels of staff through events, orientation brochures for new staff, the employee portal as well as the establishment of an Environmental Champions recognition program for Regional employees demonstrating a commitment to sustainability;
- launched the new \$100,000 Corporate Sustainability Fund in 2010 to support staff originated environmental projects with monies allocated in the past year towards initiatives focussed on corporate waste reduction and reduced greenhouse gases and air emissions;

Community:

- development of an integrated Public Environmental Communications Strategy involving an interdepartmental working group;
- public promotion via presentations and participation in various events, distribution of fact sheets, print and radio advertising and a sustainability website promoting the Region's environmental programs and services (approximately 35,000 hits since Strategy approved);

➤ **Master Planning**

- Aligned the Environmental Strategic Framework with the new Regional Official Plan and incorporated sustainability criteria for evaluation of options within the Biosolids Master Plan review;

➤ **Green Purchasing and Waste Management**

- supported development of a draft Green Purchasing resource guide - A proposal to utilize the principles in the Guide with the Region's purchasing procedures was recently presented to CLT for endorsement;
- began data analysis of the Region's Corporate Waste *production/diversion* as part of the process in establishing a reduction target;

➤ **Air/Energy**

- compiled a draft greenhouse gas (GHG)/air emissions inventory and forecast of the Region's corporate operations and initiated a multi-departmental emission reduction planning process;
- supported assessment of green energy opportunities to install solar power systems on Regional buildings to take advantage of the province's Feed-in-Tariff program;
- established strategic partnerships with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection program and the local non-profit Sustainable Waterloo;

➤ **Other**

- responded to a number of telephone inquiries and over 100 emails in the sustainability mailbox on a wide variety of environmental topics;
- maintained public reporting of the Region's established Environmental Progress Indicator database. Some highlights from recent monitoring shows the following trends:
 - Community water consumption, waste reduction and sustainable transportation indicators (e.g. transit ridership) all improved in 2009 over the previous 5 year period;
 - the Region's corporate natural gas and water consumption for its facilities remained stable in 2009 with a slight improvement since 2004 despite fairly significant growth of Regional facilities during that time;
 - the Region's corporate electricity consumption increased partially due to this growth

Several of the Environmental Progress Indicators require updated data (e.g. road salt reduction, GHG emissions) whereas there are additional indicators requiring further development. Many indicators also still require targets to be set in order for more meaningful progress tracking. Recommended targets will be developed by staff and brought forward for Council consideration in the future.

Planned Actions: 2011 - 2012

Although there are many environmental achievements to celebrate, much work is still required as our community continues to grow in population and the demand for high quality programs and services can have a negative environmental impact if left unchecked. Developing innovative solutions to balance environmental and financial impacts with community needs will require ongoing collaboration amongst staff in program areas such as Water Services, Transportation and Environmental Planning, Waste Management, Finance, Facilities Management and Fleet Services along with GRT, EMS and Police. Specifically, in 2011 and 2012, planned actions include the following:

- Recommend a corporate GHG action plan and targets which includes approximately 50 quantified actions to be undertaken by staff that reduce emissions from Regional operations – further details to be subject of a report to Council in the March/April 2011 timeframe;
- Collaborate with existing and future partners to develop a community scale climate action plan, including an application to the FCM Green Municipal Fund, as part of the Region's participation in the FCM Partners for Climate Protection program (*commencing Spring 2011*);
- Establish and administer Council's Community Sustainability Fund for environmental initiatives proposed by community stakeholders (*Fall 2011 - subject to budget approval*);
- Planning and development of a more comprehensive Environmental Procurement program

(calendar year-end 2011);

- Development of a comprehensive education and training program, coupled with ongoing support for the Corporate Sustainability Fund, to assist Regional staff in implementing the environmental strategic framework in their respective program areas (2011/2012);
- Alignment of departmental strategic plans, asset management, water supply and waste management master plan reviews with the environmental strategic framework (2011/2012);

Components of the above are fully or partially dependent on the approval of resources requested within a 2011 budget issue paper.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

Focus Area 1 - Protect and Enhance the Environment:

- Objective 1 - Develop an integrated approach to environmental sustainability

Focus Area 6 - Service Excellence

- Objective 6 - Strengthen and enhance partnerships

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None at this time, though an issue paper relative to the resources required to advance various implementation actions has been submitted as part of the 2011 budget process. These include the creation of a Community Sustainability Fund as per Council's previous direction, the application of the Environmental Strategic Framework to infrastructure lifecycle and asset management processes and provision of staff education and training.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

Development of this report included interdepartmental feedback via the Environmental Leadership Committee.

ATTACHMENTS: Appendix 1 - Other Region of Waterloo Environmental Achievements

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APPENDIX 1

Other Region of Waterloo Environmental Achievements

The Region has a wide variety of environmental programs that have existed for years which support the goals of the Environmental Strategy. There are many other environmental achievements that are attributable to staff efforts in other program areas such as Water Services, Transportation and Environmental Planning, Waste Management, Public Health, Facilities Management and its Energy Office. The following list is a sample of these achievements using recent data:

- The Rural Water Quality Program provided grants to over 100 projects – highlights include 31,000 trees planted and 2236 kilograms of phosphorous prevented from discharge into Regional waterways.
- The new Regional Official Plan increased the Environmental Sensitive Land designations within Waterloo Region to include 10,000 more hectares (almost 25,000 acres).
- The Regional Cycling Network grew to 309 kilometers.
- Waterloo Region had the highest participation rate amongst Ontario communities in the 2010 Commuter Challenge and the Region of Waterloo was among the top local organizations in terms of greenhouse gasses reduced (4000 kg).
- The expansion of the Green Bin collection program in 2009 diverted over 5000 tonnes of organic waste which is turned into compost and helped our local landfill surpass the 50% diversion rate.
- Regional Facilities achieved its 2nd Gold LEED building (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and has 5 other buildings pending certification including the new Regional Museum.
- The Region's Energy Office has completed installation of 190 kilowatts of photovoltaics to create electricity from the sun as part of an aggressive plan to install over 30 more systems in the next couple of years to take advantage of the Province's Green energy Feed-in-Tariff program which provides revenue for renewable energy generators. Applications have been made to the OPA for approximately 75% of our targeted 2.2 megawatts of solar power, with a total of 955 kW tendered to date for buildings such as GRT Strasburg Road, WRPS North Division and 8 Waterloo Region Housing buildings (further details to be included in a future report to Council).
- Public Health led an inter-departmental team to put on the 3rd annual EcoFest event which celebrates the environment and promotes sustainability – it is estimated that approximately 7000 regional residents have participated in the event held since 2008.