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Climate Adaptation Strategy adopted by Dufferin County]

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Dufferin County Council has adopted a localized plan to help prepare for the impacts of climate change in the community.

During their meeting last Thursday (Apr. 13), council received a report from Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy, regarding the Dufferin Climate Adaptation Strategy (DCAS).

The Dufferin Climate Adaptation Strategy is a localized climate plan that proactively identifies opportunities to advance climate resilience in the community's social, economic, and built-in natural systems. The creation of the strategy was supported by a Climate Adaptation Working Group, comprised of local representatives, to capture the priorities of Dufferin's rural and urban communities.

The Dufferin Climate Adaptation Strategy is a companion plan to the Dufferin Climate Action Plan.

?There are two sides of the climate coin ? the mitigation is avoiding the unmanageable and adaptation is managing the unavoidable. You really need both sides of this for comprehensive climate action,? explained MacRae. ?We realized that we needed a much more wholesome look at the localized impact that we expect and adaptation strategies to meet those challenges that we're expecting in the future.?

The climate strategy includes 23 actions that were organized into five focus areas: buildings and infrastructure, energy and economy, agriculture and natural environment, people and health, andenabling actions.

Five priority actions identified by the county to be implemented over the next five years include:

? Creating a framework for adopting a Green Development Standard to build resiliency and complete communities

? Encourage homeowners and property owners to improve climate resilience through upgrades and retrofits

? Establish and enhance emergency preparedness communications and programs

? Increase uptake of regenerative agricultural practices in partnership with farmers to increase soil organic matter, reduce soil erosion and improve water security

? Incorporate a climate lens into asset management, capital planning and budgetary processes

?We know the greater the warming, the greater the impacts. The Dufferin Climate Action Plan and Dufferin's Climate Adaptation Strategy will work together as complimentary action pathways to support global efforts to slow the pace of climate change, while also preparing our community to continue to thrive in the face of growing climate impacts,? said Coun. Chris Gerrits, chair of the infrastructure and environmental services committee.

Council also received the annual Climate Action Report Card, highlighting the progress made on the Dufferin Climate Action Plan during 2022.

The Dufferin Climate Action Plan (DCAP), developed by the county's Climate and Energy Division, is publicly known as Climate Action in Dufferin and was officially adopted by council in March 2021. It's Dufferin County's first comprehensive strategy to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 2050 and build resilience to the impact of climate change.

Using six focus areas, the Dufferin Climate Action Plan outlines 34 primary actions and 99 sub-actions for the county to take to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality and community resilience.

One of the key initiatives undertaken in 2022 includes the exploration of a Tri-County Green Development Standard in collaboration with Grey and Wellington Counties. It would prioritize building designs that reduce energy demand and increase efficiencies, such as passive cooling, air source heat pump, triple pane windows, and light-coloured roofs.

According to the DCAP Report Card, buildings account for 29 per cent of GHG emissions in the county.

Another initiative highlighted in 2022 was advancing the implementation of a regional EV fast-charging network in partnership with the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth. The collaboration helped identify a need for 17 Level 3 Direct Current Fast Charger locations.

The report also noted the completion of the first cohort of seven locally-based farmers participating in the first year of the Experimental Acres Pilot Program.

The entire Dufferin Climate Action Plan and Adaptation Strategy reports can both be found on the county's website at www.dufferincounty.ca.