

To: Cobourg Town Council
From: Jeff Robson, Design Lead, Intelligent Futures, on behalf of the Cobourg ICSP project team
Date: Wednesday, 6 July 2022
Re: Cobourg Integrated Community Sustainability Plan – Draft Plan Direction

The project team is pleased to present the draft direction for the Town of Cobourg’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The draft direction for the plan comprises a high-level vision (to 2050), focus areas of action, draft goals that translate the vision into detailed priorities, and the actions that will comprise the first five years (2023-2027) of plan implementation. As was discussed in our team’s prior presentation to the Committee of the Whole, the emerging ICSP direction is based on several inputs into the process. These include:

- Best practice and context review present in the May 2022 Sustainability Snapshot,
- Community feedback received through two formal engagement processes in February and May 2022, with feedback from nearly 200 Cobourgiens,
- Direction from the concurrent Green Development Standards and Green Energy Retrofits Feasibility Study processes, and
- Staff feedback provided through a three-day intensive “Strategy Sprint” process held in Cobourg in late June 2022. Staff workshop participants provided an approximate combined 240 hours of effort to provide administration’s perspective on the draft direction for the plan.

Though the draft direction is representative of a great deal of hard work, input, and attention from Town of Cobourg Council and staff, volunteers, and dedicated community participants, it is by no means done. In addition to seeking Council’s feedback through a presentation to the Committee of the Whole, we also intend to return to the community for a brief period of time in the summer to present this draft direction for review. This engagement is provided as an interim opportunity between the preceding May 2022 “vision and goals” engagement and the anticipated draft plan review engagement in late fall 2022. Feedback provided during this interim opportunity will be used to further shape the plan direction and ensure it remains on the right track prior to full build-out of the plan.

Thank you again for your effort and consideration throughout this planning process. The team remains grateful for the opportunity to work on this important initiative for the community and Town of Cobourg.

Sincerely,



Jeff Robson MCIP RPP
Design Lead, Intelligent Futures

1.0 Draft Vision

Description: This statement describes the state of sustainability in Cobourg at a point in the future where a stable state is reached. A vision will set a long-term ambition to be reached following successive implementations of plan actions.

Sustainability infuses the daily life of Cobourg as a community and the operations of Cobourg as a municipality. Cobourg is a leader in sustainability through stewardship of a healthy environment for future generations, support for a strong local economy and responsible urban development, and respect for cultural diversity and social and economic equity for all residents.

Sustainability in Cobourg is a consistent practice of adaptation, progress, and collaboration. It is a shared responsibility of all Cobourgians.

2.0 Dimensions of sustainability

Description: A set of categories that allows the organization of goals, targets and indicators, and actions by their relevance to a sub-area of sustainability, such as culture, economy, environment, and society.

The focus areas reflect the conventional dimensions of sustainability first introduced in the 1987 United Nations report on sustainable development “Our Common Future”. These dimensions are, in alphabetical order: culture, economy, environment, and society. Notably, focus areas are provided for both built and natural environments within the ICSP. These focus areas are intended to complement each other; they will provide a detailed focus on both the built infrastructure and systems that support and influence the environment, and the natural systems that respond to and support human life.

The proposed dimensions of sustainability for the ICSP are:

- Built environment
- Natural environment
- Economy
- Society and culture
- Governance

3.0 Draft Goals

Description: These elements – defined as ideal states for different focus areas of sustainability – drive overall progress towards the vision through specific achievement within each of the plan’s focus areas. The broad nature of sustainability planning necessarily means there are a number of goals for each focus area.

Built Environment

Cobourg...

- Supports a connected community using sustainable modes of transport through safe and convenient infrastructure
- Is guided by based on the principles of land conservation, increased community connections, and energy efficiency
- Prioritizes a diverse range of attainable housing forms to support housing equity
- Ensures urban development with environmental and social well-being as a primary focus
- Pursues renewable forms of energy at corporate and community scales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Ensures the adaptation potential for contemporary builds to support improved energy efficiency in the future
- Ensures universal design is at the forefront of each building design and process
- Integrates low-impact design principles into neighbourhood planning processes
- Supports waste reduction and diversion through circular economic principles.

Natural Environment

Cobourg...

- Is carbon neutral, and continuously reduces its carbon footprint
- Sustains resilient ecosystems to mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Continuously improves the green space network across the municipality to conserve biodiversity and promote community wellbeing
- Promotes the growth of the local tree canopy
- Protects its unique waterfront environment as an irreplaceable part of its natural heritage
- Supports a network of community-driven urban agriculture projects
- Integrates natural asset management as a fundamental component of its operations and planning.

Society and Culture

Cobourg...

- Fosters social and cultural resilience against future economic, social, and environmental crises
- Leverages local cultural programs, activities, institutions, and groups to promote all facets of sustainability
- Supports the development of community infrastructure to support accessibility, resilience, and reconciliation
- Promotes and facilitates dialogue and knowledge sharing with the region's Indigenous communities
- Is inclusive of the unique needs and dignity of all genders, races, sexual orientations, abilities, and life stages
- Encourages youth participation and leadership in promoting sustainability

Economy

Cobourg...

- Prioritizes sustainability and local purchasing in the selection of goods and services in private and Municipal development
- Promotes local economic development, with emphasis on downtown Cobourg and sustainable business incubation
- Supports a diverse and stable workforce through a range of career opportunities from entry-level to leadership positions
- Mobilizes sustainable development to attract investment opportunities and grow talent as a economic hub within the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- Is an affordable place to people across the income spectrum.

Governance

Cobourg...

- Coordinates and prioritizes sustainable outcomes through a clear, collaborative, and transparent implementation process
- Is supported by an adaptive and clear framework of policies, programs, and service delivery that advances sustainability at the local level
- Celebrates milestones and highlights local champions to support positive outcomes and community collaboration towards sustainability
- Honours the knowledge, experience, and contributions of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations as traditional stewards of the land in advancing local and regional sustainability
- Promotes partnerships, shared responsibility, and collaboration between the Town, community organizations, neighbours, and local industry
- Provides accessible and collaborative opportunities for the community to participate in engagement processes and support sustainability
- Works with regional partners, industry, educators, and advocates to promote good governance, knowledge-sharing, and broader impact across the dimensions of sustainability in Northumberland County
- Advocates for sustainable corporate and community initiatives through collaboration with other levels of government and sustainability-focused organizations
- Supports Town staff through training and professional development opportunities in sustainability
- Ensures there are adequate financial, time and human resources to support
- Ensures financial decision-making recognize lifecycle costs

4.0 Draft Actions

Description: These are the plans, policies, initiatives, infrastructure, and projects that Cobourg (as a municipality or community) will take to realize progress towards the strategic vision; actions are the most tangible and visible part of plan implementation.

While the actions are presented here in brief, the continued development of the ICSP will see the addition of detailed steps, estimated resourcing, roles and responsibilities, community involvement, measures of success, and supportive policies to provide clarity and support implementation.

01. Resource and staff Sustainability Coordinator position for the Town of Cobourg
02. Develop urban agriculture strategy to support the production of sustainable local food
03. Develop networked active transportation infrastructure on key routes (trail and street in Cobourg)
04. Audit municipal infrastructure and facilities to identify GHG use due to power, water, climate control, and develop retrofit strategies taken in response.
05. Conduct natural asset management inventory and incorporate into asset management process
06. Develop municipal fleet electrification strategy
07. Initiate Ontario municipal energy plan process
08. Develop a working group with regional educational institutions, industry groups, and labour unions to support sustainable building practices
09. Develop land acquisition strategy to support the growth and maintenance of a parkland network
10. Work with Northumberland County to support waste diversion in multi-family buildings and municipal facilities
11. Develop sustainable procurement policy for Town vendors and partners
12. Support naturalization on private lands through public education campaign
13. Continue “program design” for FCM community energy financing, with goal to develop residential green retrofit program
14. Require construction waste management plans for development projects
15. Provide “community benefit” provisions for developers maintaining a proportion of dwelling units within a development as affordable or attainable and for those making sustainable design choices
16. Develop an Accessibility & EDI strategy
17. Create decision-making and reporting structures to support plan implementation
18. Host annual sustainability summit / ideas fair to support community participation and input into plan implementation
19. Develop and implement a “Sustainability Ambassadors” public engagement and outreach campaign to support sustainability and partnership development in Cobourg.

5.0 Implementation Framework

The ICSP will unite together the vision, focus areas, goals, and actions in an adaptive management framework to ultimately realize the ambition of the plan. The ICSP is based on a timeframe concluding in 2050, and is animated by five-year intervals of action, monitoring, and review. The long-term vision, supported by short-to-medium term implementation intervals will support continual learning within both the Town and community of Cobourg, and allow time for improvement and modification based on evaluation of short-to-medium term outcomes. The framework will also allow for flexibility in plan implementation so the plan can remain relevant to emerging organizational and community priorities, and yet unanticipated changes within Cobourg and beyond.

The implementation framework comprises four parts: **act**, **report**, **assess**, and **adjust**.

Act: The delivery of services, creation of new initiatives, and implementation of infrastructure that makes up the Draft Actions listed above. Through the execution of the draft actions, the Town and Cobourg will build momentum towards sustainable outcomes, proactively learning and modifying the implementation approach as needed, to realize progress towards the long-term vision.

Report: The Town of Cobourg will deliver yearly progress reports to ensure transparency and accountability in plan implementation, and to update stakeholders on the progress towards the vision and of corporate and community highlights in sustainable action for the prior year.

Assess: At the end of each five year interval (the first being 2023 - 2027), the state of plan implementation, including the resulting successes, remaining challenges, existing and potential new resources, and planning timelines, will be evaluated. This will ensure progress towards the vision remains on track while also supporting the integration of new priorities and actions into the planning framework.

Adjust: An effective plan is one that can respond to both anticipated and yet unanticipated challenges. The ICSP will ensure its continued relevance to municipal priorities, community perspectives, and emerging events through annual and five-year milestone reviews and adjustment processes.