



Media Release

February 18, 2021

Town of Essex Passes New Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Council adopts action plan and declares climate emergency

Essex – At their Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 16, Council for the Town of Essex officially adopted [Climate Ready: A Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Town of Essex, 2021-2026](#). The plan provides a roadmap for both Council and administration to prepare and adapt to the future impacts of climate change.

“The plan is not just a road map to help us, as a municipality, prepare for the impacts of climate change,” said Mayor Larry Snively. “It will also serve as a resource for residents and local stakeholders on how they become involved in climate change adaptation, and how we can all do our part to make sure our community is safe and ready for these changes. The scientific evidence tells us how climate change will impact our community, and, as elected officials, we must do all that we can to prepare for those challenges.”

The plan, which is the first of its kind to be adopted by an Essex County municipality, covers the basics of climate change science, discusses local impacts and projections, then outlines specific action items in 11 categories, which are further split between corporate objectives to be achieved by Town administration, and community objectives, which are designed to educate and promote climate resilience for citizens and stakeholder groups.

“Like our [Corporate Strategic Plan](#), *Climate Ready* provides our entire team with specific goals and action items which we will strive to achieve,” said Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer. “However, given that the creation of the plan incorporated input from residents, business owners, community groups, Council Members, and Town staff, we expect our implementation efforts to be just as comprehensive. While the Town will lead the effort, we’ll continue to seek support and input from the community and local stakeholders to accomplish these goals.”

The plan was developed from late-2019 to 2021 in consultation with residents and local stakeholders, as well as with members of the [Essex Climate Adaptation Team](#) and Town of Essex administration.

“This was truly a team effort,” Mayor Snively added. “I’d like to thank all of the hard-working members of the Essex Climate Adaptation Team, Town staff, residents, as well as my fellow Council Members who provided their input and who helped make this plan a reality.”

At the same meeting, Council also declared a climate emergency, joining the Federal Government and 444 Canadian municipalities advocating for the drastic change needed to

reduce global carbon emissions to mitigate future climate impacts and adapt to the impacts from climate change.

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Background

The creation of *Climate Ready* was spearheaded by the Town's Climate Change Analyst, Niharika Bandaru, who has served in a contract-based staff position funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' climate change staff grants initiative under the Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP). The Town of Essex was among 59 communities across Canada, and the first in Essex County, to benefit from the initiative.

The full resolution adopted by [Town of Essex Council at their February 16 Regular Meeting](#) is as follows:

That Council adopt the Town of Essex Climate Change Adaptation Plan entitled "Climate Ready – A Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Town of Essex 2021- 2026" and direct Administration to begin the implementation process identified in said Plan, and

That Council appoint the Chief Administrative Officer as the Climate Change Adaptation Champion for the Town of Essex, to lead outreach activities and help solidify the awareness and long-term commitment to Climate Ready – A Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Town of Essex 2021-2026, and

That the Town of Essex hereby declare a Climate Emergency as follows:

WHEREAS the Town of Essex is desirous of adopting a Climate Change Adaptation Plan;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Essex has invested in the creation of the Essex Region Community Energy Plan, in partnership with the County of Essex, the Essex Region Conservation Authority, the other County of Essex municipalities, and regional stakeholders, for the purpose of collectively mitigating the risk of climate change by reducing regional emissions and energy consumption;

AND WHEREAS based on current climate projections the future impacts of human caused climate change could be catastrophic to the Town of Essex's local economy and its municipal budget and may further result in significant economic and health burdens for the constituents of Essex particularly our vulnerable populations;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Essex can join the Canadian Federal government and the 444 Canadian municipalities (including the City of Windsor, County of Essex, Town of

Amherstburg, Town of Tecumseh, and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent) who as of November 2019 have declared climate emergencies and are advocating for drastic change in order to reduce global carbon emissions to mitigate future climate impacts and adapt to the impacts from climate change;

AND WHEREAS the most recent report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that within 10 years, in order to keep the global average temperature increase to 1.5 degree C and maintain a climate compatible with human civilization, there must be a reduction in carbon emissions of about 45% from 2010 levels, reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050; and,

AND WHEREAS taking climate action steps and undergoing the low-carbon transition will also represent opportunity for economic stimulation and growing job opportunities in the new low-carbon economy;

AND WHEREAS climate change will jeopardize the health and survival of many local plant and animal species as well as their natural environments and ecosystems;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Essex and the surrounding region is already experiencing climate change impacts including, but not limited to, overland flooding, heavy rain event flooding, emergence of invasive species, an increased number of high heat days, the rise of vector borne diseases, the re-emergence of blue-green algae and harmful algal blooms in our lakes and rivers; and,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town of Essex declare a Climate Emergency and commit to urgently working towards adapting to the impacts of climate change, mitigating climate risk, and preparing for our climate future.