

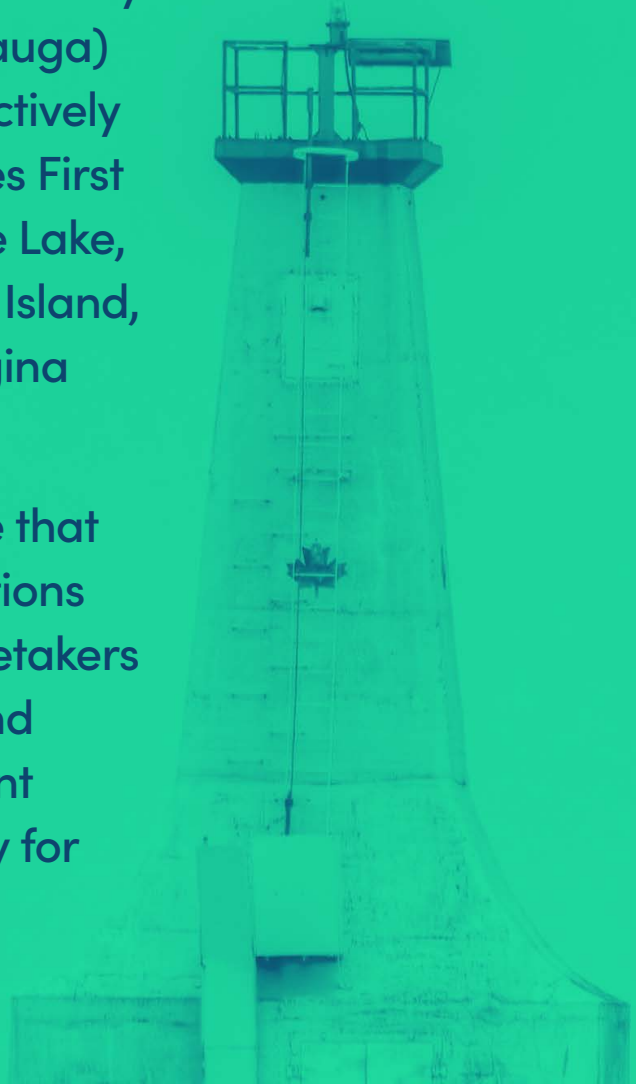
Cobourg

Integrated Community
Sustainability Plan

The Town of Cobourg respectfully acknowledges that we are located in the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, which include: Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil, and Georgina Island First Nations.

We respectfully acknowledge that the Williams Treaties First Nations have been stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters, and that today they remain vigilant over their health and integrity for generations to come.

We are all Treaty people.



**Town of Cobourg
Integrated Community Sustainability Plan**

Prepared for the Town of Cobourg by
Intelligent Futures, with support from
Entuitive and Glean, 2022-2023.

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55 King Street West
Cobourg ON K9A 2M2

The project team expresses their sincere appreciation for the significant support received from Town of Cobourg Council and administration, and community members and volunteers from the Cobourg community during the development of the plan.

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Executive Summary

In December 2019, Cobourg Town Council passed a resolution to declare a climate emergency and accelerate its transition to a more sustainable future, as defined by net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. This document – the first-ever Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) for Cobourg – is the result of this resolution and the countless hours of work and advocacy for sustainable action which have been contributed by the community of Cobourg and by Town Council and staff. The core mandate of the ICSP is to help guide the Town and community of Cobourg towards a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future.

It will encourage tangible action towards sustainability, inspire and inform other strategic initiatives within the Town, support the sustainability of the Town as an organization, and promote community-driven sustainability at a variety of scales.

To do so, the ICSP provides a long-term strategic vision, clear goals, measurable indicators, a detailed approach to plan implementation and a set of 16 key actions for the plan's first implementation period from 2024 to 2027.

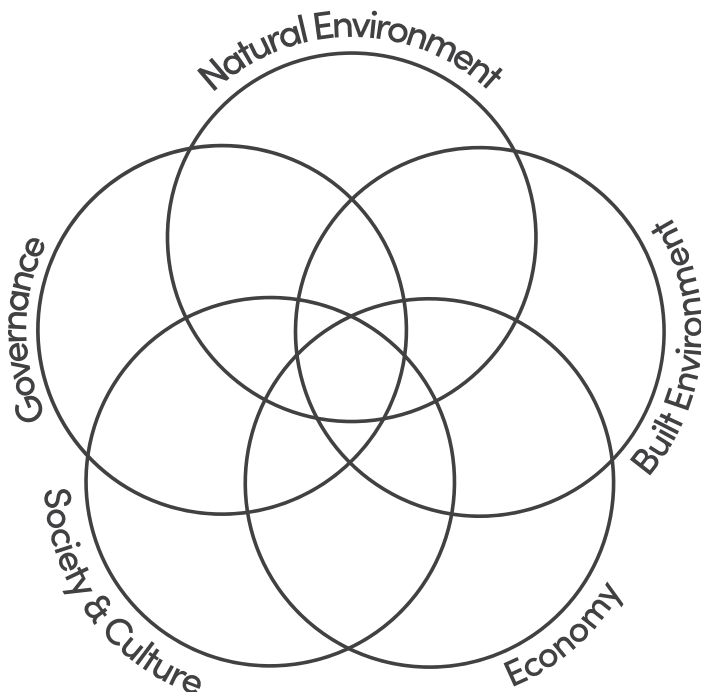
Sustainability infuses the daily life of Cobourg as a community and the operations of Cobourg as a municipality. Cobourg is a leader in sustainability through stewardship of a healthy environment for future generations, support for a strong local economy and responsible urban development, and respect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

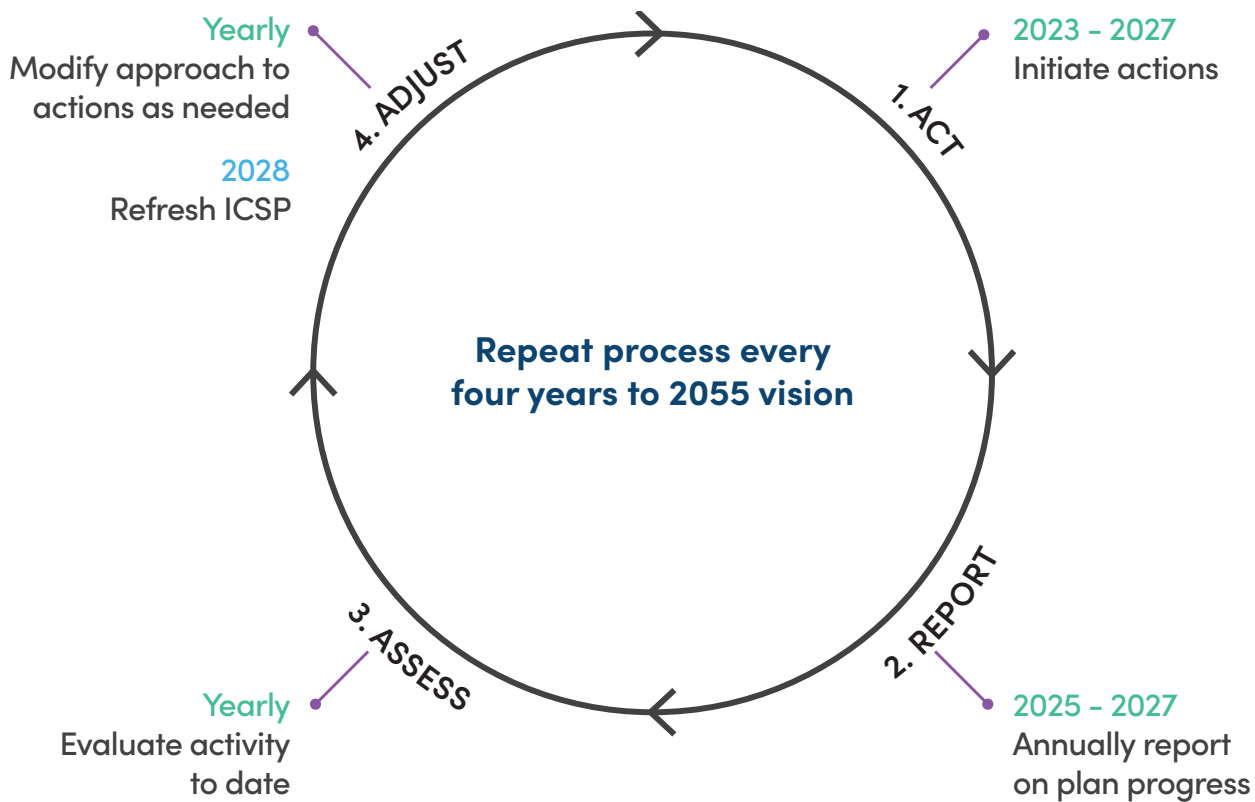
Goal Areas

How might we approach sustainability without becoming overwhelmed? The high-level vision is translated into tangible outcomes through several goals that reflect the local context and the realities of sustainable action at the municipal level. The goals are organized into distinct but complementary categories of **built environment**, **natural environment**, **economy**, **society and culture**, and **governance**.

Each of these goal areas include supporting indicators that assist in effective decision-making and adaptation, and are realized through their alignment with the ICSP’s 16 key actions.



► For a comprehensive list of the plan’s goals, organized by goal area, refer to Section 2.2 on page 17



Implementation Framework

The ICSP provides a clear implementation framework to help guide progress towards the plan vision, build partnerships between key stakeholders, and ultimately act with intention. The framework makes clear the different roles and responsibilities that may be performed by the Town and community members through the implementation process,

the steps required to measure and monitor plan progress, and the keys to effective stewardship through reporting, integrating new ideas, and coordinating action.

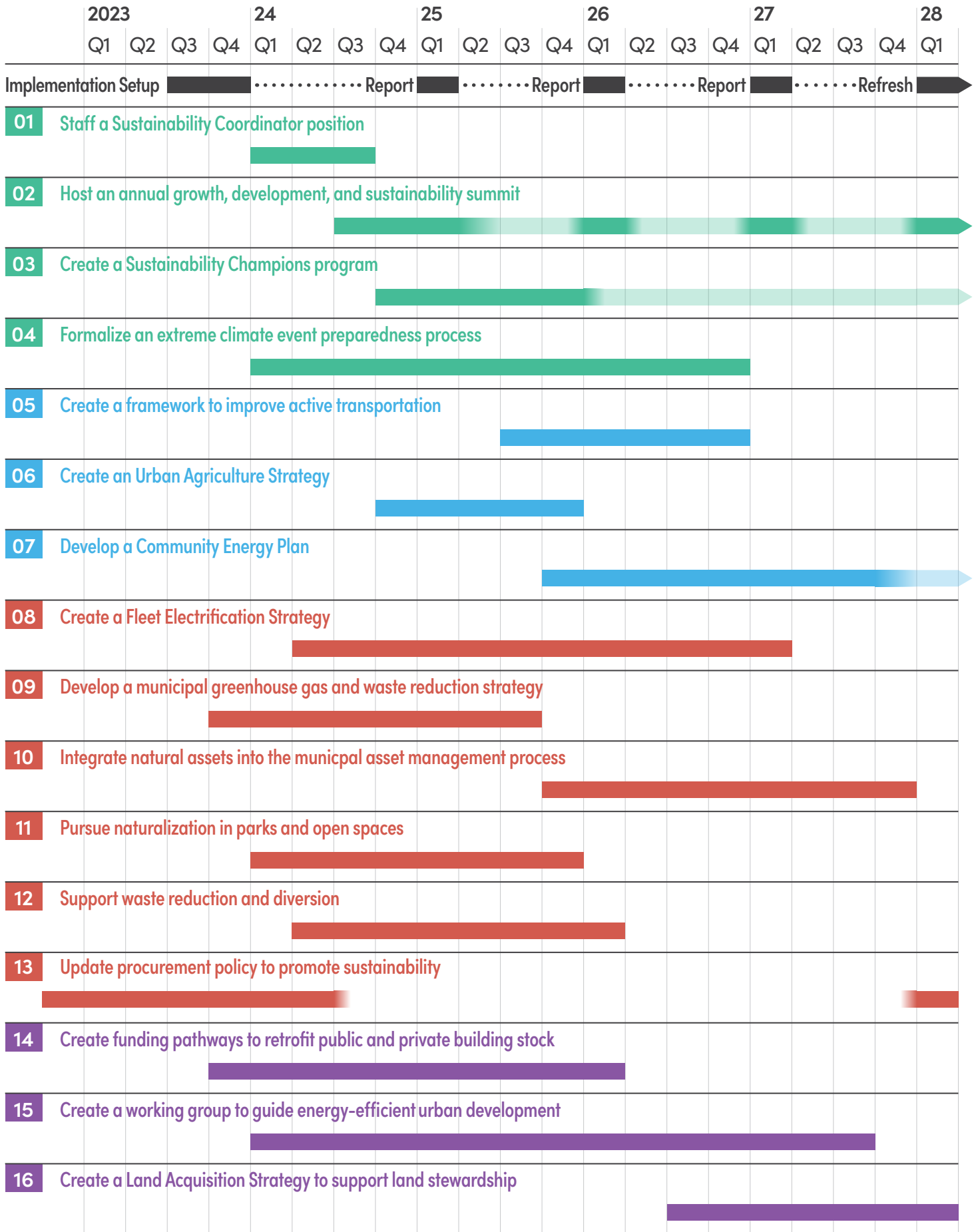
The implementation framework is animated by an approach to continual learning and improvement that will accelerate progress towards the high-level vision over time.

The framework approach includes four steps: **(1) Act, (2) Report, (3) Assess, and (4) Adjust**. Together, these steps provide the opportunity for frequent review, reflection, and adjustment in support of both the vision and future iterations of the ICSP.

The framework, together with the 16 key actions that define the ICSP, provides a comprehensive and deliberate approach to the promotion of sustainable action, organizational efficiency, and overall community well-being in Cobourg.

► For a complete overview of the plan’s implementation framework, refer to **Section 3.0 on page 21**

Action Workflow



Welcome to Cobourg's first-ever Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.



1.0

Introduction

Sustainability rests at the heart of all that we do in Cobourg, whether as a resident, a business owner, volunteer, or municipal staff member. The ICSP will chart the long-term vision for sustainability in Cobourg while providing a clear roadmap for the first four years of on-the-ground action. The ICSP builds on the momentum generated by the tireless efforts of both community members and Town staff who have worked to promote a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable Cobourg.

Through this plan, the Town and community of Cobourg affirm a commitment to strengthening and sustaining Cobourg’s natural environment, social fabric, and local economy for both current and future generations.

1.1 Context

Cobourg is geographically situated on the north shore of Lake Ontario, halfway between Toronto and Kingston. The town’s position within the upper-tier municipality of Northumberland County and in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region brings with it opportunities and challenges. In the Government of Ontario’s 2020 *Growth Plan*, Northumberland County is identified as a future growth area; Cobourg anticipates a population of 26,000 by 2034.

Defined by its rich built and natural heritage, its neoclassical architecture, and iconic waterfront, there is much to sustain in Cobourg. With a population of approximately 20,000 and growing, the Town and community of Cobourg are at an inflection point:

► How can new growth be accommodated in a way that respects the established community context while also adapting to and mitigating the continued threat of climate change?

In December 2019, Cobourg Town Council passed a resolution to declare a climate emergency and accelerate its transition to a more sustainable future, as defined by net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. The resolution built on a legacy of sustainability in Cobourg. From a policy perspective, a sample of the Town of Cobourg’s recent initiatives include the Town’s current *2019–2022 Strategic Plan, Official Plan (2017), Transportation Plan (2011), the Urban Forestry Management Plan (2018), the Climate Action Plan (2020), and the Zero Emissions Sub Committee Report (2022)*.

It is also important to note efforts beyond policy and governance. In the years prior to the declaration, a diverse group of residents have advocated for, supported and realized sustainability in ways big and small.

These shared and individual efforts have been advanced by, among others, individual community members, sustainability-focused volunteer groups, educators, industry representatives, the Town’s own Sustainability and Climate Change Emergency Advisory Committee, and municipal administration.

These efforts have been well-placed, as it is at the local level where the impact of climate change and efforts towards mitigation are most keenly felt. As local government responsibilities include land use and transportation system regulation, infrastructure planning and development, and natural systems management, they are well situated to play a key role in the promotion of sustainable development and both adaptation to (and mitigation of) climate change. Proactive approaches to sustainable development and climate change allow for long-term economic, social and environmental returns.

The “frontline” role of municipalities is highlighted through its attendant costs; in 2020, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Insurance Bureau of Canada anticipated that avoiding the worst of climate change at the local level will require a combined investment of \$5.3 billion per year in municipal infrastructure and local adaptation efforts.¹

The choice to do nothing is not tenable for both environmental and economic reasons; the report authors note “the rising occurrence of extreme weather events attributed to climate change is leading to higher costs for municipal insurance policies”, to say nothing of the broader impacts on society, environmental systems, and the economy.²

To put weight behind the declaration, the Town of Cobourg established Cobourg’s first-ever *Integrated Community Sustainability Plan* (ICSP) as a priority document that will work alongside the Town’s *Official Plan* to provide a high-level framework to guide municipal decision-making and put forward new sustainability-focused initiatives. Concurrent with the preparation of the ICSP, the Town has also spearheaded the creation of new *Green Development Standards* (GDS) to guide the urban development process managed by the Town’s Planning & Development department and the evaluation of a broad program of deep energy-efficient retrofits for multi-family buildings in Cobourg.

Together, these initiatives will build upon Cobourg’s legacy of sustainable action by offering a robust strategic and regulatory framework in response to the global climate emergency.

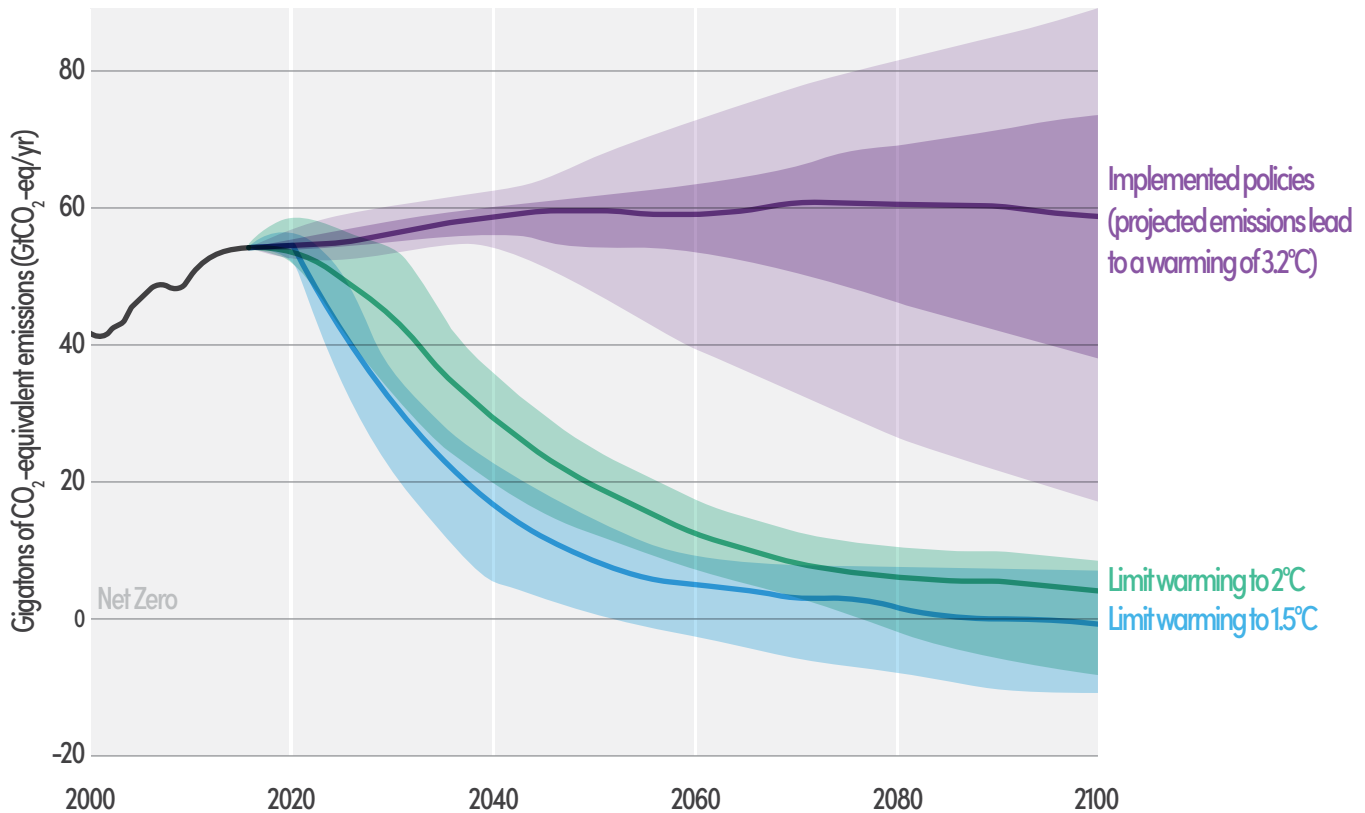
These initiatives are being implemented none too soon. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other world-wide events, Cobourg residents have several challenging years since the climate emergency resolution was first passed by Cobourg Town Council. Both at home and abroad, the case for a more sustainable and just future has never been clearer or more urgent. Global emissions of carbon dioxide from human activity have unequivocally warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land, as planet earth enters a climate emergency.³

With every additional increment of global warming, the frequency and severity of extreme climactic events is predicted to increase, from drought and wildfire to sea level rise, flooding, and variability in the global water cycle.

The March 2022 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report details an alarming list of impacts of climate change. These include “substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses, in terrestrial, freshwater and coastal and open ocean marine ecosystems...widespread deterioration of ecosystem structure and function [and] hundreds of local losses of species.”⁴

Net global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report, Climate Change 2023; ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/



At the same time, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a world-wide, historic break in the status quo, straining local communities and the systems that support them, and providing a stark example of the interconnectedness between society, culture, economy, and the environment.

The fissures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have coincided with increased attention to the intersection of social inequity and systematic disenfranchisement faced by marginalized communities across Canada and beyond. As the impacts of climate change continue to be felt, these groups will experience disproportionately adverse effects.⁵

These global and national crises serve as a backdrop for local concerns. In Ontario, climate change and extreme climate events continue to negatively impact vulnerable and vital infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystem services, lifecycle events in forests and forested landscapes, and agriculture and food systems.

Warmer winters and smaller snowpacks are producing higher winter stream flows and lower summer stream flows, thereby increasing the risks of extreme weather events that can take the form of urban flooding and persistent heatwaves. Despite the severity of these threats, progress on adaptation remains limited in the province, with little evidence of systems for monitoring and evaluating adaptation action and effectiveness.⁶

Because of its location on the shoreline of Lake Ontario, Cobourg is particularly vulnerable to flood events. Most recently witnessed in 2017 and 2019, these flood events will continue due to the continued erosion of shoreline, the reduction in riparian areas lost to urban development, and the increased severity of extreme weather events resulting from climate change. These events will result in a cumulative increase in social, economic, and environmental costs to Cobourg's residents and local government.

As part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Cobourg is simultaneously experiencing fewer of the existential challenges of growth, youth migration, and an aging population that are common to area municipalities. Demographically, Cobourg is older than both the Northumberland County and Ontario averages, with a higher proportion of individuals 65 years and older at 34 per cent (relative to 29 per cent and 18.5 per cent, respectively) in 2021. Similarly, Cobourg has fewer working-aged (15 to 64-year-old) people in the population, at 53.5 per cent relative to Northumberland County generally at 58 per cent and Ontario at 65 per cent.

As well, Cobourg has a lower median household after-tax income and higher unemployment rate than Ontario as a whole. The 2021 Census of Population reveals a median household after-tax income of \$69,000 in 2020 relative to the Ontario average of \$79,500 for the same period. The *Northumberland County Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan* notes the increasing pressures on households due to housing costs. In April 2021, the average home resale price was \$677,000—well above the affordability threshold for an average household in the County.

This information is shared not to demoralize the reader, but rather to be realistic about the scope of the challenge ahead. Sustainability is a shared project and everyone has a responsibility and role to play in advancing it within the community.

This ICSP provides a firm but flexible framework for directing the shared effort that will support positive change and an improved quality of life for both current Cobourgians and the future generations who are depending on everyone to make responsible decisions today.



1.2 How to use the plan

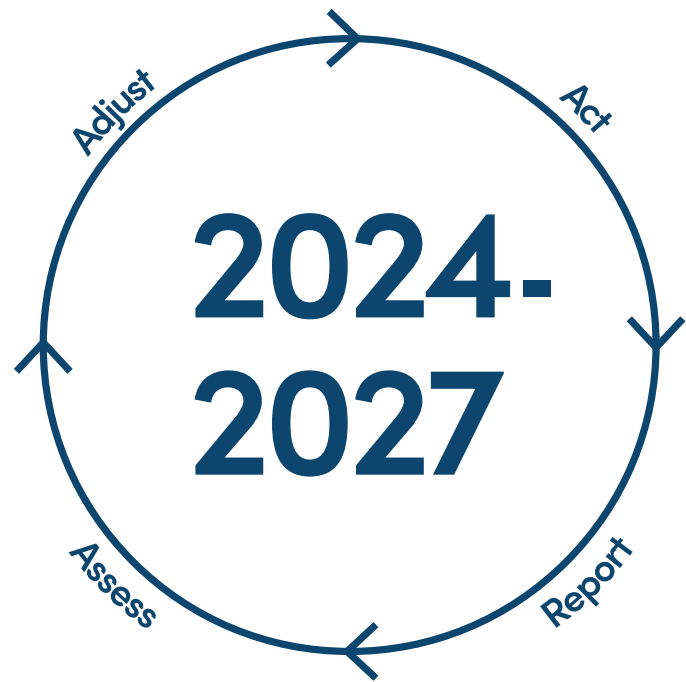
The ICSP is the Town of Cobourg's primary strategic plan to support community sustainability and responsible urban development and governance for the next 30 years. The ICSP will inform the Town's policy framework by providing direction to other guiding documents, including the Town's Official Plan.

Direction in the ICSP is focused on the period of 2024 - 2028, otherwise referred to as the first implementation period. Notably, preliminary setup will begin in 2023. At the conclusion of this interval, it is recommended that the plan's actions and outcomes be reviewed and revisited to ensure the ICSP remains relevant to contemporary trends and unexpected changes within Cobourg and beyond.

The ICSP includes direction for strategic process improvements to support sustainability within the Town as a municipal government and service provider, recommendations for policy and planning purposes, and individual initiatives and projects that will support the overall strategic vision towards sustainability in Cobourg. The ICSP will also provide support for coordination of municipal and community actions to ultimately realize the long-term vision and underlying goals for sustainability in Cobourg.

The vision and goals are supported by several complementary elements of the plan:

- A set of measurable sustainability indicators that will contribute to an understanding of progress towards the vision for sustainability and which will help shape the future development of performance targets
- A measurement and reporting framework to collect and include sustainability data in municipal decision-making



- A comprehensive approach to plan implementation that prioritizes internal coordination within the Town of Cobourg; community engagement, participation, and stewardship; and opportunities for long-term monitoring and iteration
- 16 key actions within the first phase of implementation designed to tangibly realize the strategic direction of the plan, support the Town and community's legacy of sustainable action, and build momentum towards the next implementation period

Appreciating the dynamic nature and continual evolution of sustainability in Cobourg, the ICSP includes guidance in **Section 3.1.6** for new ideas to be brought forward into the implementation process outside of the four-year phase of implementation, assuming sufficient support and a detailed rationale for its inclusion in this period are provided.

1.3 Input into the plan

The strategic direction for the ICSP is informed by several different inputs into the planning process. Each of the provided inputs—sustainability context, established standards, municipal policy and priorities, and stakeholder feedback—were considered and weighted to arrive at the direction for the ICSP. These inputs are described in brief below:

- **Sustainability context:** The current state of sustainability in Cobourg was evaluated through an environmental scan of stakeholders and available data and indicators for Cobourg. This input helped shape the preliminary action response and the plan’s emphasis on indicator development and reporting to support informed decision-making over time.
- **Established standards:** The standards and science put forth by the Governments of Canada and Ontario, supranational institutions such as the United Nations, and sustainability-focused non-governmental organizations were used as guidelines to shape the direction of the ICSP.
- **Municipal policy and priorities:** The Town of Cobourg’s policy framework and organizational priorities were reviewed in consultation with municipal Council and administration to ensure that the ICSP supports existing direction and ongoing initiatives.
- **Stakeholder feedback:** At several key junctures in the process, the Cobourg community was consulted to gain insight into the current state and potential future for sustainability in Cobourg. Feedback from community engagement was incorporated into current state reporting, the strategic direction (vision and goals), and the resulting actions present in the plan. Given the moderate level of community interest and involvement in the ICSP planning process, additional direction has been included to support ongoing community engagement through the first four-year implementation interval of the plan.



1.4 Plan development process

The ICSP was developed through a three-phase planning process that united an assessment of the context for sustainability in Cobourg, a review of comparator municipalities in Ontario, ongoing engagement with stakeholders using multiple outreach methods, and consistent consultation with the Town of Cobourg's administration and Council. These steps were taken through the following phases:

Phase 1: Review background

Through January to April 2022, the project team conducted a desktop review of the Town's policy framework and data indicators, benchmarking of comparable Ontario municipalities for performance measurement purposes, and delivered public engagement to understand the existing community context for sustainability. This phase of stakeholder engagement ran from February 17 to March 16 through an online questionnaire

administered on the Town of Cobourg's engagement platform, and the delivery of a virtual workshop. The phase yielded input from a combined 123 Cobourgians across both methods; this input was used to shape the local context considerations and served as an input into the planning process.

Key document: *Sustainability Snapshot Working Document (May 2022)*

Phase 2: Establish strategy

Through April to July 2022, the project team consulted with stakeholders to collaboratively uncover and synthesize a draft vision and set of supporting goals to effectively set the strategic direction of the plan. Stakeholders were asked to consider the different dimensions of sustainability (culture, economy, environment, society) when envisioning a sustainable future for Cobourg to promote a systemic approach to positive change.

This phase of engagement was conducted from April 28 to June 8 through an online questionnaire and the delivery of several virtual workshop sessions throughout May. This engagement phase saw 72 participants provide feedback across both methods; this feedback was used to substantively inform the strategic direction of the plan.

The phase included a three-day intensive planning session with Town administration to ensure the emerging planning direction aligned with both community feedback and the organizational realities present within municipal government. The result of this phase was a high-level direction of the plan (vision, objectives, potential indicators, and preliminary actions) informed by the work performed to date.

At the conclusion of the phase, the emerging direction was shared with Council and the community through a presentation to the Committee of the Whole in July. Feedback was sought on this emerging direction through an additional engagement opportunity, with 55 participants providing feedback on the vision, goals, actions, and what was felt to be missing.

Key document: *Draft Plan Direction (July 2022)*

Phase 3: Review direction

In the third and final phase of the planning process, the ICSP was drafted and brought forward to community and other stakeholders for comprehensive review and comment through an online questionnaire and a drop-in session held in November and December 2022, respectively. During this period, 63 participants provided feedback on each of the ICSP actions (5-point Likert scale and open text). The ICSP was revised based on this feedback and readied for Council review in spring 2023.

1.5 Supporting work

As noted under **Section 1.1**, the ICSP was developed in tandem with two complementary projects: the creation of green development standards (GDS) and an assessment to determine the feasibility of a “green energy” retrofit (GER) program for housing in Cobourg. Both complementary projects result from directions provided in the Town’s 2020 *Climate Action Plan*. Future directions for the GDS and GER are provided as key actions in **Section 3.2** of this document.

A review of the plans, policies, and initiatives that are shaped by and/or otherwise help support the implementation of the ICSP are listed in **Section 3.1.3** (Connections with Other Initiatives).

1.5.1 Green Development Standards

GDS are “voluntary or mandatory measures developed by municipalities to encourage developers and builders to create thoughtful and innovative developments using sustainable design, which considers the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability.”⁷⁷ A municipal GDS is used to protect ecosystems, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, support healthy community development, and adapt to (or mitigate) the impacts of climate change.

An effective GDS program provides a review framework that supports effective decision-making in the planning and development process and connects the high-level sustainability goals established in the Official Plan and ICSP with the practical details of individual development applications. As such, the GDS provides practical direction to both the development industry representatives and municipal planners, so that urban development ultimately supports municipal sustainability goals and climate action.

1.5.2 Green Energy Retrofits

With funding from the FCM, the Town of Cobourg has undertaken a feasibility study to explore the prospect of a “deep energy retrofit” financing program for low-income rental communities within Cobourg.

A deep energy retrofit study refers to the introduction of relevant tools, technologies, operational techniques, and management processes to reduce energy use and improve the energy performance of buildings. The study assessed Cobourg’s housing stock from a perspective of its cumulative energy retrofit potential and explored how financing can be best positioned to reduce barriers to such a program.

Endnotes:

1. Insurance Bureau of Canada and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Investing in Canada's Future: The Cost of Climate Adaptation at the Local Level," 5.
2. Insurance Bureau of Canada and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 12.
3. Bush et al., "Canada's Changing Climate Report in Light of the Latest Global Science Assessment"; Ripple et al., "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency."
4. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Climate Change 2022 Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Summary for Policymakers," 11.
5. Douglas and Pearson, "Ontario; Chapter 4," *Canada in a Changing Climate: Regional Perspectives Report*.
6. Douglas and Pearson.
7. Cipriani and Behan, "Towards Low Carbon Communities: Creating Municipal Green Development Standards – An Implementation Toolkit for Municipal Staff," 2.



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 for all residents.



2.0

Direction



Building upon years of work by the Town and community of Cobourg, the following section establishes the strategic foundations for sustainable action.

These strategic foundations will be realized through the extensive implementation guidance detailed in **Section 3.0** of the document.

The following structure shows how the parts of the ICSP complement each other across its implementation period to realize the vision and goals for sustainability.

LONG TERM
↑
MEDIUM TERM
SHORT TERM

Vision

A concise and compelling description of the ideal state of the future

> Goals

An ideal state for various elements of the ICSP

>> Implementation Framework

The workflow, practice, and governance of implementation

>>> Key Actions

Detailed actions that are specific, measurable, and time-bound which help move Cobourg towards the vision and goals



2.2 Goal Areas

Sustainability is a wide-ranging concept that covers most every aspect of life on the planet. The question becomes: how might we approach sustainability without becoming overwhelmed? The plan's Goal Areas provide this structure. These are a set of categories that organize distinct goals and indicators by their relevance to a dimension of sustainability.

The goal areas reflect the conventional dimensions of sustainability first introduced in the landmark 1987 United Nations report *Our Common Future* on sustainable development. In alphabetical order, these dimensions are culture, economy, environment, and society. These dimensions have been built upon to create a set of goal areas reflective of the Cobourg context and the realities of achieving sustainable outcomes at the municipal level. These are: **built environment, natural environment, economy, society and culture, and governance.**

Goal Area: Built Environment

Buildings, land use, roads and trails, waste, energy

Cobourg...

- supports a connected community using sustainable and active modes of transport through safe and convenient infrastructure
- is guided by 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
- promotes the utilization of natural resources for carbon sequestration, followed by green energy solutions such as solar, wind, or geothermal energy
- conserves its significant architectural heritage
- ensures universal design is at the forefront of each building design and process
- respects and considers the impacts from ravine and coastal flooding and erosion hazards
- looks to reclaim and/or naturalize the built environment within hazardous lands
- integrates low-impact development principles into neighbourhood planning processes
- supports waste reduction and diversion through circular economic principles

Goal Area: Natural Environment

Trees, greenhouse gases, water, air

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 and enhances its unique waterfront environment as an irreplaceable part of its natural heritage
- protects and enhances its existing natural areas to conserve biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change
- supports a network of community-driven urban agriculture projects
- integrates natural asset management as a fundamental component of its operations and planning

Goal Area: Society and Culture

Health, safety, arts, equity, diversity and inclusion

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
- enhances the visitor, resident, and business owner experience in Cobourg to support a strong sense of belonging and pride
- 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



Goal Area: Governance

Decision-making, coordination and collaboration

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, advancing local and regional sustainability
- promotes partnerships, shared responsibility, and collaboration between the Town, community organizations, neighbours, and local industry
- ensures financial decision-making recognizes lifecycle costs
- 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 the creation of municipal tools and 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 provide necessary support
- continually reviews new ways of working to best reflect contemporary sustainability practices in context of its duty to the public

Goal Area: Economy

Jobs, commerce, cost-of-living, employment sectors

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
- is an affordable place to live
- 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 an economic hub within the Greater Golden Horseshoe

2.3 Target

The sole target in place for the first four-year interval of the ICSP is perhaps also the most significant.

The most recent assessment of Cobourg's energy efficiency performance in 2018 revealed that as a community, Cobourg has met and surpassed the then-current interim federal target of 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030.

The actions contained in **Section 3.2**, as well as in the concurrent GDS, will assist Cobourg in moving towards this ambitious target. Particular actions in this plan focused on the development of a municipal greenhouse gas reduction framework and the development of a *Community Energy Plan*, which will provide further procedures, tools, and insight into the continued reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Once a full picture of Cobourg's performance is understood on several sustainability indicators at both the corporate and community levels, subsequent targets may be developed and approved by the Town of Cobourg for in-depth monitoring and regular reporting. See **Section 3.1.5** for more information on measurement and evaluation to support the ICSP.

The guiding target to 2050

The Town and
community of Cobourg
will collaborate to
**reduce community-
wide greenhouse gas
emissions by 80 to
100 per cent by 2050**

For the implementation of a plan to be successful, it must not only consider what and why something is to be done, but also how it gets done. This framework will bridge the gap between the strategic-level community vision and goals and the practical directions for action, providing a roadmap for sustainable action for the first implementation period.



3.0

Implementation

Sustainability has many dimensions and within each, it is necessary for the cooperation of a number of stakeholders to effect change. This framework will provide direction for how the plan's vision is realized and the way its supporting actions are achieved. At a philosophical level, the framework will discuss the distinct purpose and opportunities which are present in the ICSP, and the principles that have been chosen to inform its creation.

3.1.1 Purpose and opportunity

The ICSP is a primary guiding document that will fulfill several key and complementary functions in helping to advance the Town and community of Cobourg towards the established long-term vision and goals for sustainability. The functions of the ICSP are to:

- **Encourage tangible action towards a sustainable Cobourg:** Section 3.2 provides a detailed description of the 16 key actions that have been identified and prioritized for the first four years of the plan's implementation process
- **Inspire and inform other strategic initiatives within the Town of Cobourg:** The ICSP is a guiding document, and its vision and goals will inform current and future plans, policies, and initiatives instituted by the Town of Cobourg. Section 3.1.3 illustrates the interconnectedness between this document and others within the municipal policy framework.
- **Support the sustainability of the Town of Cobourg as an organization:** The ICSP includes key actions that will help advance sustainability within the Town of Cobourg as a municipal entity. From continued advocacy for energy efficiency within municipal operations to sustainability-first decision-making in a range of areas, the ICSP will support a broad range of sustainable outcomes within local government.

- **Promote community-driven sustainability at a variety of scales:** Sustainability is a shared responsibility that will require the support, commitment, and talents of all Cobourgians to be fully realized. The ICSP includes several actions that engage and encourage the community of Cobourg towards taking sustainable actions at household, neighbourhood, and community-wide scales. The ICSP includes several opportunities for the community of Cobourg to get involved in Town-led initiatives while also providing space for community-led initiatives to be brought forward and integrated into the plan's implementation framework.

The framework will also provide guidance for how the plan will be implemented through:

- connections to relevant plans, policies, and initiatives already underway
- evaluation and reporting of progress
- management and collaboration structures
- roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders responsible for the plan
- the process to update the plan at the end of the four-year 2024–2027 implementation cycle

3.1.2 Principles

The implementation framework is guided by three primary principles:

Clarity: The implementation framework will offer a clear understanding of the direction of the plan by identifying its end-state vision and a detailed roadmap for how to get there. This principle encourages momentum by allowing people—whether municipal staff, community members, or other stakeholders—to easily place where they are in the process.

Focus: The ICSP is animated by the idea that the quality of results is more important than a quantity of actions. To ensure the best quality results, only the most impactful and practical actions were included.

Priority: The ICSP's key actions are logically sequenced to reflect both corporate and community priorities while respecting the resources available to implement the plan. Sequencing actions allows for achievement in one part of the plan to ripple outwards and support other actions in this plan and initiatives occurring elsewhere in the Town and community.

3.1.3 Links to other initiatives

Direction: The annual reporting period for the ICSP will provide an opportunity for Town Council, administration, advisory committees, volunteer groups, and the general public to revisit the progress towards the goals included in each of these plans. The annual ICSP Report to Council will, where possible, include a brief update as to the status of each of the following implementation processes and will note changes in context and relevant policy variables.

The ICSP stands on the shoulders of the people, projects, and policies that have (or are currently) supporting sustainable development in Cobourg across each of its dimensions. From this section, it is possible to observe the positive progress that has brought the community to this moment. Indeed, there is no shortage of existing initiatives related to sustainability that can be supported by—and which can support—the ICSP. This plan is connected to each initiative listed in **Appendix A: Policy Framework** through a shared focus on improving quality of life for residents while reducing negative impacts across the dimensions of sustainability.

Unless otherwise noted in the action section, the ICSP provides overarching strategic direction and guidance to these initiatives while leaving the implementation details to each of the listed initiatives themselves. This will minimize the potential for redundancy and confusion around where one plan stops and another begins.

3.1.4 Roles and responsibilities

To realize the scope and ambition of the ICSP, the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders charged with implementing the plan must be properly understood. While the Town of Cobourg will continue to play an important role in achieving sustainable outcomes, the broad community of Cobourg—including residents, industry, volunteer-led organizations, and institutions—each have their own role to play in the ICSP.

Under this framework, the Town of Cobourg may assume one or more of eight different roles. In this context, a role is a general function the Town may fulfill to support or lead progress towards the vision, goals, and actions of the ICSP. In each action within the plan, the Town's role is made clear.

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding
- **Capacity Builder:** The Town of Cobourg improves the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on this shared action
- **Convener:** The Town of Cobourg brings people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Funder:** The Town of Cobourg provides funding to other organizations to do their work.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to citizens or customers

Though these roles are presented for the Town of Cobourg, this set of roles may also be used by other organizations within the community to shape how they engage with the ICSP and the implementation of their own sustainability-focused initiatives.

Responsibilities for steering and management of the ICSP and for each of its actions are also identified. Each action includes the identified action “owner,” supporting actors within the Town of Cobourg who will help shape implementation of the action, and the extent and type of community involvement.

3.1.5 Measurement and evaluation

To measure progress towards the plan’s vision and goals, a number of indicators are provided. Where possible, measurement of ICSP progress will be deferred to plans, initiatives, and reporting processes already in place.

Notably, measurement and monitoring cannot take focus away from realizing progress towards the plan. There is a balance to strike in using available resources and the time required to measure; if there is a choice between advancing an action or reporting on it, choose the former every time.

Unless required for a specific action, the collection and interpretation of data outside of existing implementation processes, operating requirements, and available open-source data will be limited. Any additional data collection will require assistance from a third-party group. While this offers an impartial perspective on sustainability progress and demands little additional time from Town staff, it nevertheless requires additional expenditure in order to be realized.

For the first implementation period, use of existing data sources and monitoring processes will be prioritized. If, after the first implementation interval, progress reporting is found to be difficult or variable in quality, third-party data collection and monitoring will be pursued.

Indicators

Indicators are “concise information systems that provide quantitative and qualitative information about the condition and trajectory of a system and why certain trends occur in specific contexts.”⁸

Indicators are a useful tool to understand where we find ourselves in a process and how we might reach the anticipated vision.

For indicators to be effective, they must meet the following criteria:

- **Meaningful:** Does the indicator reveal something about progress being made in the ICSP? Will it promote understanding of the direction and magnitude of change over time?
- **Measurable:** Is it possible to obtain data to support this indicator? Is the level of resourcing required to measure this data appropriate to the municipality?
- **Understandable:** In telling something about sustainability, is the indicator easily understood by the intended audience, and will it motivate action and encourage reflection and adaptation over time?

Each of the dimensions of sustainability require their own set of indicators from which to derive meaning. Fortunately, given the concurrent implementation of several plans that fall under the umbrella of sustainability (Section 3.1.3 and Appendix A), there are many existing structures under which it is possible to collect and reflect upon data.

Notably, some of these relevant plans do not possess indicators of their own. For those plans that suggest indicators shall be developed as part of their respective implementation processes, the ICSP will defer to those processes. For those that do not, key indicators are proposed.

The following tables denote the indicators that will be used to inform continued progress towards the ICSP vision.

List of indicators

Culture	
Indicator	Source, current or anticipated
Number of municipal cultural heritage designations, total and yearly	Town of Cobourg
Number of listed cultural heritage properties, total and yearly	Town of Cobourg

» Cultural indicators to be developed during implementation for the *Cultural Master Plan* (S. 1.3, 2019)

Economy	
Indicator	Source, current or anticipated
New housing price index, year-over-year	MLS - Northumberland Hills Association of Realtors
Development applications, year-over-year	Town of Cobourg
Affordable/attainable housing starts, year-over-year	Town of Cobourg
Total number of households spending 30 per cent or more on shelter costs	Statistics Canada (census period)
Consumer price index, year-over-year	Statistics Canada, provincial-level
Consumer price index, 12-month per cent change	Statistics Canada, provincial-level
Employment rate	Statistics Canada (census period)
Participation rate	Statistics Canada (census period)
Labour force characteristics, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Statistics Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
Median after-tax income	Statistics Canada (census period)
Government transfer rate	Statistics Canada (census period)

» Municipal economic sustainability data collected under Section 294(1) of *Municipal Act 2001* through the Financial Information Return. Corporate economic sustainability is monitored under this process.

Continued on next page >>

List of indicators, continued

Environment	
Indicator	Source, current or anticipated
Public transit ridership, quarter-over-quarter	Town of Cobourg
Percentage of population residing within 500 metres of public transport stop or active transportation infrastructure	Town of Cobourg
Percentage of population using shared or active transportation for commuting	Statistics Canada
Cumulative distance of cycle tracks, bike lanes, multiuse pathways, pedestrian pathways, etc.	Town of Cobourg
Number of electric vehicle charging stations	Town of Cobourg
Energy use, gigajoules (GJ)	Town of Cobourg / Lakefront Utility Services Inc. (LUSI)
GHG emissions, tonnes CO ₂ equivalent (tCO ₂ e)	Town of Cobourg / Enbridge / LUSI
Electricity use, kilowatt hours (kWh) (Corporate and community-wide)	Town of Cobourg / LUSI
Corporate fleet fuel consumption, litres (L)	Town of Cobourg
Corporate facility gas consumption, (m ³) (Corporate and community-wide)	Town of Cobourg / Enbridge
Waste generation, metres cubed (m ³) (Corporate and community-wide)	Town of Cobourg / Northumberland County (NC)
Percentage, waste diverted from landfill	Town of Cobourg / NC
Potable water consumption, residential (l/p/d)	LUSI
Potable water consumption, other (l/p/d)	LUSI
Total water use (corporate)	Town of Cobourg / LUSI
“Unaccounted for” water lost due to infrastructure failure, unauthorized access	Town of Cobourg / LUSI
Percentage, land cover by tree canopy	Town of Cobourg
Percentage, protected natural areas as proportion of total municipal land area	Town of Cobourg

Environment, continued

Indicator	Source, current or anticipated
Number, implemented green infrastructure projects	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected
Number of developments with energy-efficient or “green” features	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected
Dollar value, environmental grants awarded	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected
Number of urban agriculture initiatives ongoing in Cobourg	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected
Count, participation in urban agriculture initiatives	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected

Social

Indicator	Source, current or anticipated
Population growth	Statistics Canada (census period)
Age distribution	Statistics Canada (census period)
Northumberland County Food Bank access	NC
Percentage of income, household expenditure on food	Statistics Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs
Percentage of population reporting sense of belonging being very strong or somewhat strong	Town of Cobourg, not currently collected

» Equity, diversity, and inclusion indicators to follow those established by the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (*A Guide for New and Established Members*, p. 42, 2020) for reporting on progress made toward the goals of the *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy* (2021)

» Poverty-related indicators to be developed as part of implementation of Northumberland County’s *Community Safety and Well-Being Plan* (S. 4.0, 2021)

Notable shifts in indicator data will be included in ICSP progress reporting, as detailed in the following section 3.1.6

3.1.6 Stewardship

To effectively support the vision and goals of the ICSP and to make progress on the actions within, the implementation framework requires transparent reporting, methods to integrate new ideas and opportunities, and consistent collaboration among Town of Cobourg departments and within the community. The following section briefly describes the necessary tasks associated with each requirement.

Reporting

Progress report: Beginning in 2025, in the first quarter of each year, the Town of Cobourg’s Sustainability Coordinator will bring forward a ICSP progress report for information to Cobourg Town Council. The progress report will detail the contemporary state of the ICSP, including implementation progress for active plan actions, relevant community engagement outcomes, encountered challenges, and recent sustainability performance indicators where available. The report should be presented in an accessible and visual manner to assist understanding. The annual progress report will also be shared with:

- The Town of Cobourg committees and boards through an annual presentation following the Council presentation (Q1 or Q2 each year, beginning 2025)
- Interested volunteer groups and community stakeholders in attendance at the annual growth, development and sustainability summit, beginning in 2025

Quarterly reporting updates will be made to the Town of Cobourg’s Sustainability and Climate Change Emergency Advisory Committee by the Sustainability Coordinator through the committee’s regular meeting schedule. Given the frequency of these meetings, the reports will focus on brief progress updates on action implementation and community engagement and will seek feedback as to how the committee and its networks can support further progress.

Council report: The Council report format, wherein Town staff bring recommendations on Town business forward for Council deliberation, will be updated to include a description about how the report item aligns with progress towards the vision, goals, and actions of the ICSP. Including a “sustainability lens” in Council reports will support municipal decision-making through an understanding of sustainability-related opportunities and tradeoffs. It will also provide an opportunity to consider how contemporary decisions do (or do not) support progress towards the vision of the ICSP and the risks being addressed.

Integrating new ideas and opportunities

Growth, Development, and Sustainability Summit: While the vision and goals will guide the Town and community of Cobourg towards sustainable outcomes for the next 30 years and the actions will provide certainty for the next four-year implementation interval, how might we integrate new ideas, opportunities, and initiatives as they emerge and take shape?

The Summit, among its other functions, provides an opportunity for interested stakeholders to bring forward new ideas for integration into the ICSP, assuming they align with the priorities of the Town. For more information about this opportunity, refer to **Action 2: Host an annual growth, development and sustainability summit.**

Coordination

Sustainability Working Group: The Town of Cobourg will form a Sustainability Working Group (SWG) to coordinate cross-departmental efforts towards the plan's vision, goals, and actions. Drawn from representatives of each of the Town of Cobourg's departments, the SWG will meet each quarter to raise challenges for resolution, identify new potential actions aligned with departmental priorities for future implementation intervals, and review cumulative progress.

A cross-departmental approach will reflect the multidisciplinary nature of sustainability challenges, encourage nimble internal collaboration, and promote a diversity of perspectives to ensure different departmental priorities are reflected in ICSP implementation.

Staff participating in the SWG should possess knowledge and/or portfolio-based interest in sustainability and should hold a decision-making role within their respective departments. The latter is a key condition as it will ensure that the ICSP is represented in intradepartmental discussions concerning resourcing and the prioritization of actions within departmental business plans.

Community participation: While the Town of Cobourg is a key actor in the realization of the ICSP vision, goals, and action, it exists in a large and complex system comprising different interests, perspectives, and capacities.

As sustainability is a shared responsibility, there is a continual imperative to work with community interests to guide implementation and realize the plan's vision and goals.

The actions listed in **Section 3.2** identify opportunities for community involvement in their implementation. This is also informed by the roles and responsibilities listed in **Section 3.1.4**.



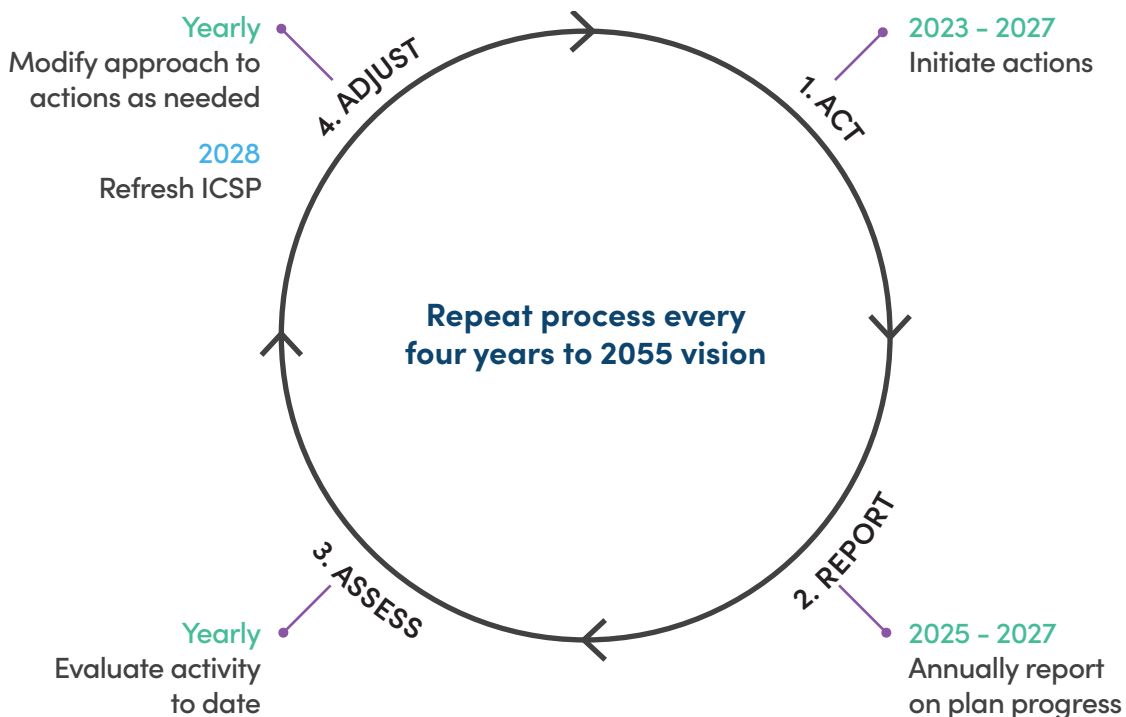
3.1.7 Implementation cycle

The path forward to the 30-year vision is animated by four-year implementation intervals comprising actions, monitoring, collaboration, and review. This will support an environment of continual learning, improvement, and progress while providing the flexibility necessary for the ICSP to grow and change with Town and community priorities as well as unanticipated changes and external events within Cobourg, Ontario, and beyond.

Each implementation interval comprises four parts: **Act, Report, Assess, and Adjust**. The first implementation interval on the path to 2055 is a four-year period from 2024 to 2027, with flexibility to extend into 2028 to resolve any outstanding actions. Work in 2023 will focus on preliminary setup and initialization of actions.

- **Act:** Through existing plans, planned actions in the ICSP, and parallel community-led initiatives, the Town and community of Cobourg will build upon existing momentum, learn, and adjust to realize sustainable outcomes and continued progress.

- **Report:** The Town of Cobourg will prepare and deliver annual progress reports to ensure transparency and accountability, and to update the community on progress towards the vision, sustainability performance, and implementation highlights.
- **Assess:** Through the planned four-year intervals, there is time to assess the state of implementation—the successes resulting from Town and community effort, the stubborn challenges that remain unresolved, the available and emerging resources—and to position them within the timeline. This will help ensure progress continues towards the vision.
- **Adjust:** It is clear that a successful plan is one that is able to adapt to both new and continuing challenges. The ICSP will remain relevant and responsive to the Cobourg context through the adaptive potential present in both annual and four-year milestone plan review periods.



Beginning in 2025, it is recommended that the Town of Cobourg conduct an annual review of progress towards the plan's vision, and if the situation warrants, modify the proposed action timeline and supporting implementation process to respond to the lessons learned from ongoing implementation.

Such interim adjustments to the ICSP can include new approaches to delivering a planned action, improvements brought forward by dedicated community members, new opportunities for collaboration within the Town of Cobourg and among external stakeholders, and the availability of new material or human resources. This review will be shepherded by the Sustainability Coordinator with support from the Sustainability Working Group as needed.

Any required departure from the ICSP as originally presented to Cobourg Town Council shall emphasize more effective or efficient methods to achieve progress towards the vision, and should not result in any reductions to planned actions.

At the conclusion of the first implementation interval in 2027, the Town shall revisit the ICSP's implementation framework and key actions to reflect both the lessons learned from this first four-year interval and changing priorities within both the Town and the broader community of Cobourg.

Subsequent implementation intervals will be guided by the overarching vision and goals developed in this iteration of the ICSP, while the yearly reporting requirement, public engagement opportunities associated with individual plan actions, and the annual growth, development and sustainability summit will provide several opportunities for new actions to be identified and brought forward in real time for inclusion in future implementation intervals.

3.2 Key actions

3.2.1 Summary

Each of the 16 actions listed in this section are grouped into one of the four categories listed below.

Cooperation & Coordination

This action category concerns the management, governance, and coalition-building aspects of sustainability.

Community Planning

This action category focuses on the introduction of new frameworks and/or strategies to continue sustainable community development in Cobourg.

Operations & Service Delivery

This action category supports the day-to-day sustainable operations of the Town of Cobourg and the sustainable delivery of municipal services to the residents of Cobourg.

Urban Development

This action category refers to the key actions that will support a sustainable planning and development process in Cobourg.

3.2.2 Phasing

The ICSP will be delivered using a phased approach to support logical sequencing and to allow momentum to build as actions are delivered and are built upon by subsequent actions. The anticipated implementation begins in the third quarter of 2023 and is anticipated to conclude at the end of the fourth quarter of 2027.

In 2028, a process to refresh the ICSP will be conducted. If an action has been deferred at any point during this implementation period, it may be brought forward into the next period for implementation.

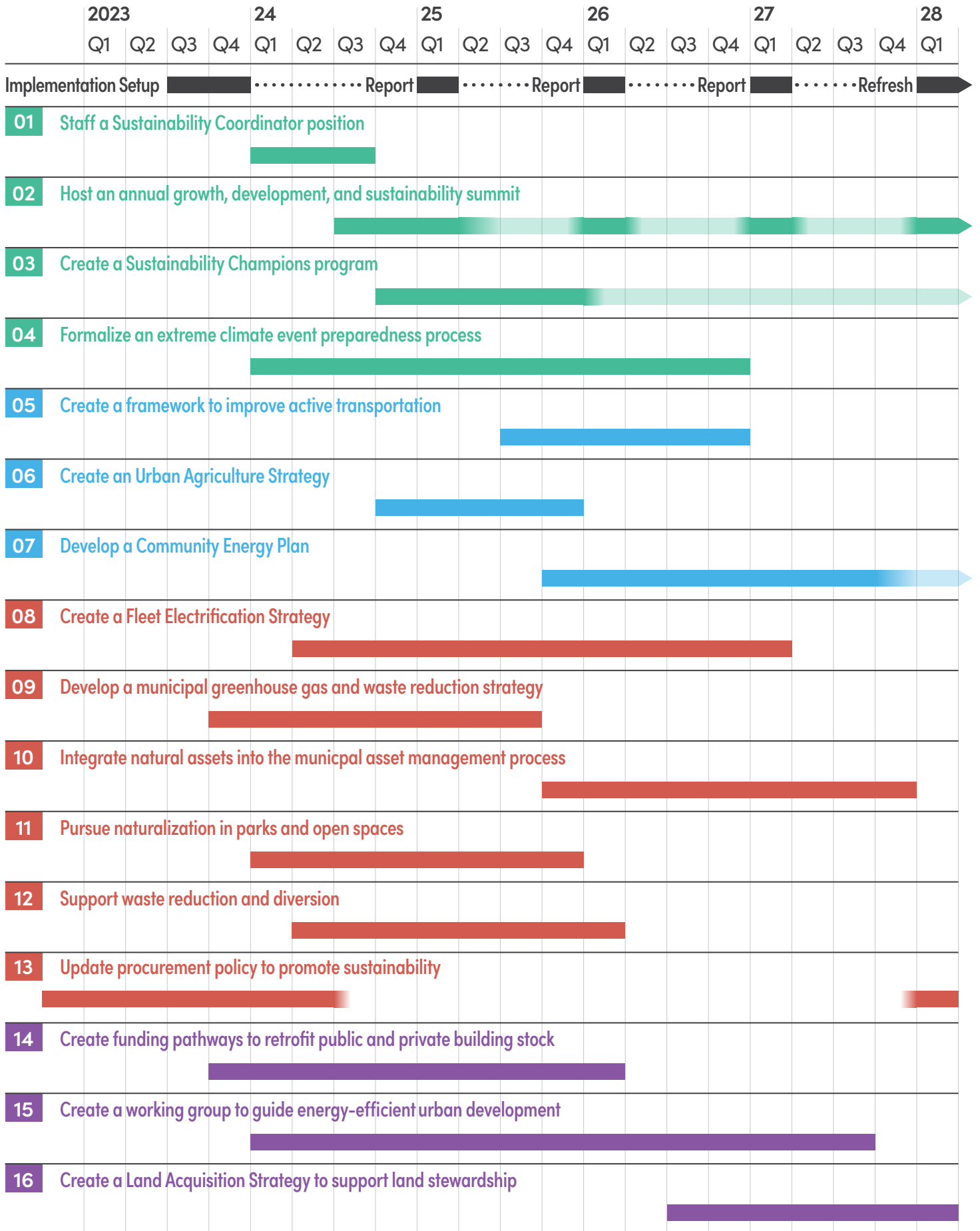
[See the following page for a visualization of the first implementation period >>](#)

3.2.3 Structure

Each of the actions include a number of supporting details to ensure sufficient clarity for their forthcoming implementation. Each action within this section contains the following information:

- **Category:** Assignment to one of the categories introduced in **Section 3.2.1**
- **Description:** A detailed explanation of the action to be taken, including any supplementary information that provides clarity as to why it is included in the ICSP
- **Intended outcome:** A description of the desired outcome resulting from implementation of the action
- **Key steps:** The essential steps necessary to realize the action, with anticipated timing
- **Role of municipality:** The type of role the Town of Cobourg will assume in delivering the action, per **Section 3.1.4**
- **Action owner:** The lead individual, group, or department responsible for delivering the action
- **Supporting actors:** The secondary (non-lead) individuals, groups, or departments responsible for aiding the action owner in implementing the action
- **Additional expertise required:** Additional expertise identified as necessary for completing initiatives that may need to be filled through consulting or other external advisory groups
- **Community involvement:** Key stakeholders in the community who can provide support and/or leadership in realizing the action
- **Measure of success:** The relevant indicators that will help determine the extent to which the action has been achieved
- **Action is complete when:** The end state in which the action can be considered completed.
- **Links to other actions:** A list of other actions that will be directly or indirectly supported by implementation of the named action.
- **Plans and policies:** A list of the relevant plans and policies already in place that the action will support or use as guidance.

Action Workflow



Key steps:

- **Q1 2024:** Home department requests budget allocation for Sustainability Coordinator position as part of 2023 budget cycle
- **Q2 2024:** Conduct hiring process for Sustainability Coordinator position
- **Q3 2024:** Hiring process complete, Sustainability Coordinator position filled. The Sustainability Coordinator begins stewardship of ICSP implementation.

Role of municipality:

- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Planning & Development (the “home” department for Sustainability Coordinator)

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg Council (budget allocation approval)
- Town of Cobourg administration (Planning & Development, Corporate Services, Community Services, Public Works, Legislative Services, Fire Services, Police) for steering group creation

Measure of success:

- The Sustainability Coordinator position is resourced and staffed

Action is complete when:

- The Sustainability Coordinator position is resourced and staffed

Links to other actions:

- Coordination, planning, and implementation of each subsequent action



Action 02

Host an annual growth, development and sustainability summit

Category:

Cooperation & Collaboration

This action prompts the creation of an annual summit with community members, staff, committees and experts to promote sustainable action, celebrate champions, and identify sustainable initiatives for the next year. This summit is intended to be an annual sustainability hub for community members to bring forward new ideas for implementation. The summit will collect important resident inputs to ensure sustainability planning continues year after year in Cobourg.

Description:

The creation of the ICSP reflects a moment in time; it builds upon the good work already done by community members, political leadership, administration, industry, and others in Cobourg to set a positive direction for sustainability. For the vision of the plan to be realized, community engagement and collaboration must continue through the plan’s first implementation period and beyond.

To support the plan’s implementation, engage with current and emerging community leaders and build momentum towards the plan’s vision, an annual growth, development, and sustainability (“the Summit”) will be held. The Summit will provide the space and time for community stakeholders to convene, reflect on the progress so far, and plan out the key steps for the upcoming year. The Summit will be hosted by the Town of Cobourg, with an open invitation to interested community members and volunteer leaders to participate in, learn from, and inform the Summit agenda.

Key elements of the Summit agenda may include:

Speaker series: Sustainability advocates, practitioners, and educators are invited to contribute their knowledge and experience in sustainability both at home in Cobourg and in other communities through informative presentations that illustrate the possibilities for the next year of plan implementation and beyond.

Progress reporting: The Town will share its annual sustainability progress report, highlighting key areas of progress and sharing challenges to be worked through.

Community highlights: Organized and individual community stakeholders are invited to share highlights of their own work on sustainability over the year, identifying new initiatives, celebrating champions, and looking forward to the work to come.

Ideas fair: A facilitated group dialogue that builds new connections between planned ICSP actions and existing community action to support and accelerate progress, and to raise new community-led ideas and initiatives that move Cobourg towards the vision for sustainability.

Key steps:

- **Q3 2024:** Begin planning for Summit activities (i.e. preliminary communications and outreach, programming, venue selection and booking)
- **Q4 2024:** Begin advertisement and promotion of the Summit
- **Q1 2025:** Host first annual Summit

The same stepwise process will be followed for each subsequent year, beginning with the inaugural Summit in Q1 2025. Understanding that organizing a single-day event is no small endeavour, the Summit may place a burden on existing staff time and capacity.

As this is a novel idea for Cobourg, each Summit is an opportunity to implement lessons learned from the previous year's Summit, where issues of programming, scaling, scheduling, participation, and support are concerned. The Town may seek opportunities to involve dedicated sustainability-minded volunteer groups and individuals in the planning and delivery of the Summit agenda.

Role of municipality:

- **Convener:** The Town of Cobourg brings people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting actors:

- All Town of Cobourg departments
- Town of Cobourg Committees with the Sustainability and Climate Change Emergency Advisory Committee acting as lead
- Sustainable Cobourg

Community involvement:

- General public
- Local volunteer practitioners for subject matter expertise, planning support

Measure of success:

- Number of attendees at event
- Self-reported attendee satisfaction (information collected at event)

Action is complete when:

- Beginning in 2025, the Summit is active and is being held annually for the first implementation interval

Links to other actions:

- Create a Sustainability Champions program
- Create a framework to improve active transportation
- Develop Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Develop a Community Energy Plan

Plans and policies:

- *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (2021)*
- *Climate Action Plan (2020)*
- *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020-2024 (2020)*
- *Public Engagement Policy (2016)*

Action 03

Create a Sustainability Champions program

Category:

Cooperation & Collaboration

This action aims to ensure that a diverse Sustainability Champions program is in place to support education and outreach for sustainable living in Cobourg. In particular, the group will be responsible for ensuring effective communication, outreach, and the delivery of community-based demonstration projects. The sustainability champions program will work as an information sharing group between the Town and residents working to make Cobourg more sustainable.

Description:

Sustainability is a shared project in which everyone in Cobourg has an opportunity to advance positive and sustainable change through actions big and small. In recognition of this, the Town and community of Cobourg will implement a Sustainability Champions program to promote sustainable living, provide access to educational resources, and mobilize community support to help Cobourgnians in their efforts to live sustainably.

The program will promote a culture of positive habits, seek out and foster partnerships within the community to support ICSP implementation, engage in sustainability-driven demonstration projects, and promote participation in future sustainability planning processes and initiatives listed in the ICSP.

Establishing the basis for the program will be the early focus of implementation.

This period should focus on:

- building a network by contacting established community champions and placing open calls in media, public events, and educational institutions
- piloting key messages to support sustainability through Town and volunteer group communication channels
- promoting day-to-day sustainable actions that can support long-term positive impacts, including active transportation, resource efficiency, and waste reduction

When building the roster of Sustainability Champions, effort should be made to reflect the diversity of experiences and demographics that exist in Cobourg. Once the basis for the program is created, the Sustainability Champions program may be mobilized to support the ongoing implementation of other ICSP actions within the four-year period.

Key steps:

- **Q4 2024 – Q1 2025:** Open call for Sustainability Champions membership (including at the inaugural growth, development and sustainability summit)
- **Q2 2025:** Development of communications and engagement approach for program
- **Q3 2025:** Deployment and testing of sustainability messaging via Town of Cobourg communication channels
- **Q4 2025 and onwards:** Community networking and recognition of efforts via the Summit and established community groups, deployment on Town-led projects and ICSP supporting actions as needed, yearly review of program outcomes

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Convener:** The Town of Cobourg brings people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg– Sustainability Coordinator
OR Sustainability Working Group

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Communications, Community Services, Legislative Services)

Community involvement:

- General public
- Local volunteer practitioners for subject matter expertise, planning support

Measure of success:

- Membership in Sustainability Champions program
- Number of Town projects supported by the Sustainability Champions

Action is complete when:

- Sustainability Champions program comprises active membership, and is deployed on several Town-led projects

Links to other actions:

- Create an Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Create a framework to improve active transportation
- Develop a Community Energy Plan

Plans and policies:

- *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (2021)*
- *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020–2024 (2020)*
- *Public Engagement Policy (2016)*

Action 04

Formalize an extreme climate event preparedness process

Category:

Cooperation & Collaboration

This action ensures the Town of Cobourg has a defined extreme climate event preparedness process in place to respond to extreme climate events and ensure Cobourgnians are kept safe.

Description:

Communities across Canada are expected to experience an increase in the length, frequency, and intensity of extreme weather events due to the changing climate. For Cobourg, these extreme weather events include heatwaves, drought, sudden seasonal storms, and flooding.

These events hold the potential to overwhelm local infrastructure and service delivery, limit access to affected areas (in the case of flooding and storms, and outdoor activities in the case of heat), and directly impact the health and well-being of Cobourgnians, particularly those living on the margins.

The spring 2017 and 2019 Lake Ontario flood events damaged municipal infrastructure and private property, while also causing significant economic impacts. More recently, the winter 2022 storm caused ongoing power outages, widespread disruption to transportation and municipal infrastructure, and saw both Cobourgnians and commuters in freezing temperatures, often stranded without heat or shelter.

A 2016 study conducted by the Government of Ontario’s Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the University of Toronto explored the baseline and anticipated future for heat wave frequencies in Ontario.

Cobourg, as part of the Haliburton, Kawartha, and Pine Ridge District Health Unit, saw a baseline of 0.18 heat waves from 1971 to 2000. By 2050, the frequency of heatwaves is expected to rise such that there will be at least one every summer. By 2080, it is expected that there will be nearly three heat waves per summer.⁹

Concurrently, a 2020 study conducted by researchers exploring the impact of climate change on the Great Lakes noted a projected increase in the frequency and amount of precipitation during both winter and spring seasons as well as an observable reduction of shoreline due to erosion.¹⁰

As a result, the potential for both more extreme weather events and the flooding of properties adjacent to both the shoreline and connected streams has increased significantly.

There is opportunity to build on the existing emergency management infrastructure in Cobourg to provide a targeted and effective response during and following extreme climate events.

At the end of this action implementation, the Town of Cobourg will have a defined extreme climate event preparedness approach in place to respond to extreme climate events and ensure Cobourgians are kept safe. This process will comprise:

- An index of public buildings in Cobourg for use as emergency response, warming and cooling centres
- A stakeholder map of community partners that can be mobilized to support Cobourg's vulnerable populations during extreme weather events
- A climate-health vulnerability assessment to understand the nature of the risk posed to Cobourg's population, the municipal capacity to support and safeguard the community, availability of resources, and effectiveness of existing measures
- A public education program to support Cobourgians to make their homes more resilient to extreme weather events, and to prepare for the interruption of municipal and commercial services
- Development of both heat-island and floodplain mapping for the community
- Long-term analysis and visualization studies to identify which areas are most vulnerable to shoreline erosion and to define adaptation measures
- A program to engage landlords and property managers to support their residents with access to cooler areas within residential buildings during a heat event as well as the provisioning of safety information

- Input into the forthcoming green energy retrofit program design to integrate climate resilience into a retrofit program
- The integration of extreme climate events into emergency response planning, with representation from the District Health Unit, Northumberland County, and local social service providers
- Review of permanent back-up power provisioning for strategic municipal assets, such as the Cobourg Community Centre
- Evaluation of a maximum temperature bylaw feasibility for Cobourg, to be presented to Cobourg Town Council for decision

This action will be part of an update to the *Community Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)*.

Key steps:

- **Q1 - Q2 2024:** Develop index of public buildings for use as emergency response centres
- **Q3 - Q4 2024:** Map stakeholder networks of community partners
- **Q4 2024:** Integrate extreme heat considerations as a program design consideration into ongoing energy-efficient retrofit work
- **Q1 - Q4 2025:** With partners, conduct climate-health vulnerability assessment to understand contextual nature of risk posed by extreme heat weather in Cobourg
- **Q1 2026:** Integrate findings from vulnerability assessment into emergency response planning
- **Q2 - Q4 2026:** Create report to Council for feasibility evaluation of maximum temperature bylaw

Many of the key elements of this action are within the jurisdiction of Cobourg's Emergency Operations Committee and CEMP. Should the CEMP be scheduled for update prior to the envisioned timeline for this action, the key steps should be expedited to ensure direction from the ICSP be adequately captured in that plan.

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to our citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg –
Emergency Operations Centre

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Communications, Community Services, Legislative Services, Transit)
- Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority (GRCA)
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Northumberland County –
Community & Social Services

Additional expertise required:

- Flood hazard mapping

Community involvement:

- GRCA for subject matter expertise, engagement, and implementation support
- Outreach and awareness-building for vulnerable populations and social service clients through District Health Unit and regional Community & Social Services networks
- Multi-family and long-term care landowners and property managers, for program support

Measure of success:

- The Town of Cobourg can activate the extreme climate event preparedness toolkit during periods of adverse weather

Action is complete when:

- The extreme climate event preparedness process as described is completed

Links to other actions:

- Create a Sustainability Champions program
- Create funding pathways to retrofit public and private building stock

Plans and policies:

- *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2020)*
- *Northumberland County Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (2021)*
- *Climate Action Plan (2020)*
- *Community Emergency Management Plan (2015)*

Action 05

Create a framework to improve active transportation

Category:
Community Planning

This action aims to create a supportive framework for active transportation to guide built infrastructure planning, design, and implementation. This framework will comprise, at minimum, a renewed strategic direction for active transportation, detailed design guidelines for transportation engineering projects, a gap analysis, and a phased implementation plan. This framework will be integrated with the work of the planning department to support a comprehensive active transportation network in Cobourg.

Description:

Transportation is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Cobourg, and the same issue is seen across Canada. Improving walkability, and opportunities for active transportation—that is, people-powered transportation—within Cobourg is an important sustainability tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, relieve transportation network congestion, support mobility choice, and improve community health outcomes.

Today, Cobourg has a variety of existing active transportation opportunities, advocates, and infrastructure.

For example, Cobourg is a node on the Waterfront Trail running from Sault Ste. Marie to the Ontario – Québec border. The Trail provides economic opportunities to enhance Cobourg’s infrastructure for waterfront cyclist and pedestrian tourism. That said, for daily active transportation trips, more work remains to be done.

Through this action, Cobourg will build a supportive framework for active transportation to implement safe, accessible, and connected infrastructure on key routes in both built-up urban areas and open spaces.

Before practical design and construction decisions can be made, the Town will first conduct the necessary precursor steps to build this framework, including:

- Updating the *Transportation Master Plan* (2011) with a detailed active transportation element that includes priorities and cost estimates
- Creating design guidelines to support safe, accessible, and connected travel through active transportation modes, including but not limited to walking, mobility devices, cycling, and skateboarding
- Producing an annual implementation plan rooted in the budgetary realities of Cobourg and projected funding sources and partners

Together, these items will provide the necessary clarity and direction for active transportation in Cobourg, and will include direction for all-season operation. As part of this process, winter maintenance considerations will be clearly defined and rooted in the budgetary realities of municipal service delivery.

Key steps:

- **Q3 2025:** Create project terms of reference
- **Q4 2025 – Q4 2025:** Allocate budget and create Request for Proposal for external consultant to update *Transportation Master Plan* (2011) and draft active transportation design guidelines
- **Q1 2026 – Q3 2026:** Conduct review of *Transportation Master Plan* direction for active transportation
- **Q1 2026 – Q3 2026:** Review *Cobourg Cycling Infrastructure Completion Proposal* (2021) and work with Bicycle Action Committee for integration within the active transportation framework

- **Q4 2026:** With direction from the *Transportation Master Plan* and the active transportation design guidelines, create an annualized implementation plan to implement and maintain planned active transportation infrastructure

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Funder:** The Town of Cobourg provides funding to other organizations to do their work.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting actors:

- Cobourg Fire Services and Police, for design review (regarding emergency access) and active transportation safety promotion
- Town of Cobourg (By-law enforcement, Communications, Engineering, Parks, Planning & Development, Roads)

Additional expertise required:

- Active transportation planning and engineering

Community involvement:

- Bicycle Action Committee, for subject matter expertise and foundational work, and for events hosting and support
- Local educational institutions (students and teachers), for program input and participation
- Industry and non-profit grants or sponsorship, for cycling infrastructure such as bike racks, storage, water fountains
- Transportation Advisory Committee, for review and implementation support

Measure of success:

- **Infrastructure-specific:** longitudinal year-over-year increase of active transportation infrastructure use (tracked through infrastructure-based counters or seasonal observed sample counts)
- **Network-wide:** longitudinal year-over-year increase of active transportation use in Cobourg (currently tracked through Statistics Canada travel-to-work sample)

Action is complete when:

- Completion of *Transportation Master Plan* update, active transportation design guidelines, and annualized implementation framework (the supportive framework)
- Construction and implementation of new active transportation routes (new construction and reconstruction) emerging from supportive framework implementation

Links to other actions:

- Develop a Community Energy Plan
- Create a Land Acquisition Strategy to support land stewardship

Plans and policies:

- *Bicycle Action Committee Cobourg Cycling Infrastructure Completion Proposal* (2021)
- *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020–2024* (2020)
- *Downtown Cobourg Master Plan* (2016)
- *Parks Master Plan* (2013)
- *Transportation Master Plan* (2011)
- *Cobourg East Secondary Plan* (2005)
- *Waterfront District Plan*
- *Zoning Bylaw*



Create an Urban Agriculture Strategy

Category:

Community Planning

This action aims to build a comprehensive urban agriculture strategy to support a clear decision-making framework for Town staff and to provide new opportunities for community members to create, continue, and support their own individual or collective urban agriculture initiatives.

Description:

The Town of Cobourg will develop a strategy to encourage urban agriculture within Cobourg, in an effort to promote a local food movement and to increase local food security, promote the productive use of neighbourhood-based green spaces, support natural ecological systems, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

An urban agriculture strategy for Cobourg will provide a supportive regulatory framework for urban agriculture development through the clarification of municipal policy, best practices and upstream policy partnering opportunities. The strategy will explore and grow community interest in the various dimensions of urban agriculture, including but not limited to:

- community and home-based gardening initiatives
- pollinator pathways and urban apiaries
- urban farming and small footprint economic development opportunities
- public agriculture and edible landscaping in public rights-of-way
- education and awareness campaigns
- community composting and soil availability

Key steps:

- **Q4 2024:** Create project terms of reference
- **Q1 2025:** Engage with subject matter experts or consultants to identify urban agriculture best practices and review gaps in municipal policy
- **Q2 2025:** Conduct communications campaign to build community awareness
- **Q2 - Q3 2025:** Perform key stakeholder engagement
- **Q3 2025:** Update Property Standards and bylaws (i.e. Parks, Zoning) to support urban agriculture
- **Q3 2025:** Update Community Grants Program to earmark portion of funds to support sustainable local agriculture, including in-kind contributions
- **Q4 2025:** Draft and circulate urban agriculture strategy
- **Q4 2025:** Finalize urban agriculture strategy through Council for implementation

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Capacity Builder:** The Town of Cobourg improves the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on this shared action.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Funder:** The Town of Cobourg provides funding to other organizations to do their work.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg:
 - » By-law (Property Standards By-law)
 - » Communications (communications, marketing, educational support, public awareness efforts, community services)
 - » Economic Development (promotion, business development assistance)
 - » Planning & Development (bylaw compliance and regulatory support)

Community involvement:

- GRCA for subject matter expertise, engagement and implementation support
- Industry, for sponsorship and participation opportunities
- Local educational institutions (students and teachers), for program input and participation

Community Involvement, continued:

- Local volunteer practitioners, regional food policy groups, existing growers, market gardeners, and food banks for subject matter expertise, strategic direction feedback

Measure of success:

- Grants program feedback and performance from participants
- Successful urban agriculture award program, with increasing participation over time
- Increased local food production, distribution and manufacturing initiatives

Action is complete when:

- Urban agriculture strategy is approved by Cobourg Town Council
- Urban agriculture is enabled through municipal regulation

Links to other actions:

- Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process
- Pursue naturalization in parks and open spaces

Plans and policies:

- *Parks Master Plan* (2013)
- *Urban Forest Management Plan* (2018)
- *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020–2024* (2020)
- *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy* (2021)
- *Tannery District Sustainable Neighbourhood Master Plan* (2021)

Develop a Community Energy Plan

Category:

Community Planning

An approved Community Energy Plan will provide recommendations for ways to achieve the immediate and prioritized reduction of emissions.

This action builds upon the work and momentum of the *Climate Action Plan (2020)* as well as the concurrent ICSP, Green Development Standards implementation, and Green Energy Retrofits study process.

Description:

The *Ontario Municipal Energy Plan Program (OMEPP)* offers municipalities matched funding to develop a plan to help their corporate and community efforts to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and resulting greenhouse gas emissions, explore the impact of forecasted urban development on energy needs, and support economic development and sectoral growth related to the renewable energy sector.

Ontario’s *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* provides the basis for this action through its focus on the consideration of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions in the context of land-use planning decisions. Further direction in the Greater Golden Horseshoe’s *Growth Plan* suggests each municipality should develop their own greenhouse gas inventories and emission reduction targets.

Engagement with OMEPP and the subsequent preparation of a community energy plan will support both the Town and community of Cobourg to work towards a low-carbon future and reorient local economy and society towards clean energy use.

The OMEPP will provide the necessary system-wide perspective on the process needed to comprehensively transition Cobourg to its clean energy future.

The OMEPP will examine the potential for, among others:

- The economic development opportunities related to clean energy
- The role of the public and private sectors in achieving the transition
- Different scenarios for development and operation pertaining to status quo, moderate and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions

As of 2022, the Government of Ontario provides 50 per cent coverage of eligible project costs to a maximum of:

- \$90,000 to create a new plan, or
- \$25,000 to continue work on an existing plan, including the generation of energy data or maps, stakeholder engagement, or the creation of detailed implementation plans

Key steps:

- **Q4 2025:** Create project terms of reference, with particular emphasis on gaps remaining from 2019 – 2023 sustainability planning processes setting interim targets, and lessons learned from corporate greenhouse gas emissions framework development
- **Q1 2026:** Determine distinction between new plan creation or existing plan expansion (as an addendum to the municipal framework or to the *Climate Action Plan*), allocate budget and create Request for Proposal for external consultant support
- **Q2 2026 – Q3 2027:** Work with external consultant to develop a Cobourg Community Energy Plan (CCEP)
- **Q4 2027:** Begin CCEP implementation, and consider economic development opportunities for investing in Green Energy sector service providers such as lighting retrofit, window replacement, insulation or alternatively establishing business partners with preferred vendors who meet prescribed quality standards

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator OR Corporate Services

Supporting actors:

- LUSI
- Northumberland County
- Town of Cobourg (Communications, Community Services, Planning & Development)

Additional expertise required:

- Community energy and greenhouse gas emissions modelling

Community involvement:

- Industry / Development, for review and feedback
- Municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (knowledge sharing and lessons learned from their own community energy planning processes)
- Non-government and volunteer organizations, for review and feedback

Measure of success:

- Year-over-year decline in greenhouse gas emissions (measured as tonnes CO₂ or equivalent) for corporate (Town) and community sectors

Action is complete when:

- Cobourg Community Energy Plan (CCEP) is approved by Council and in implementation

Links to other actions:

- Develop municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy
- Create funding pathways to retrofit public and private building stock

Plans and policies:

- *Climate Action Plan* (2020)
- *Official Plan* (consolidated 2017)
- *Council Strategic Plan* (current 2019 – 2022)
- *Urban Forest Management Plan* (2018)
- *Transportation Master Plan* (2011)

Create a Fleet Electrification Strategy

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action works to ensure the Town of Cobourg has a functional strategy for transitioning the municipal fleet from internal combustion engine-powered to battery-powered where possible.

Description:

In the fall 2022, the Zero Emissions Vehicle Subcommittee Report was presented to Cobourg Town Council for information.

The Subcommittee conducted a robust investigation into various forms of electric, hybrid, hydrogen, alternative, and gas vehicle performance measures, ultimately proposing that the Town move forward by using Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) in its municipal fleet.

The report investigates the financial, electrical, and waste management impacts of electrifying Cobourg’s fleet, and includes research into each of the Town of Cobourg’s fleet typologies (i.e. snowplows, fire trucks, passenger vehicles, etc.).

The report also outlines a series of funding opportunities and partnership suggestions including the Town’s existing connection with Metrolinx and other prospective partnerships such as the Clean Air Partnership and the Clean Air Council.

Key recommendations from the report are to:

- Join the Clean Air Council
- Begin a fleet electrification pilot project
- Pursue all available funding programs for BEVs and evaluate charging options for municipal fleet electrification
- Direct staff to develop an aggressive policy plan supported and led by the new procurement department to deploy BEVs across the municipal fleet
- Place advance orders for BEVs after detailed analysis is completed in order to have vehicles in the pipeline.

Building on momentum generated from the report, this action directs staff to create a strategy for the transition of the municipal fleet and development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

This will include developing a planned fleet inventory, determining the priority for vehicle replacement, identifying potential locations and providers for vehicle charging infrastructure, and pursuing funding opportunities to support the aforementioned areas.

Key steps:

- **Q2 2024:** Develop project terms of reference
- **Q2 2024:** Identify additional funding and information resources for fleet transition
- **Q3 2024 – Q4 2024:** Allocate budget and create Request for Proposal for external consultant support
- **Q1 2025:** Create an inventory of all municipal fleet vehicles with current life cycle plan
- **Q1 2025 – Q4 2025:** Create a detailed analysis of electric vehicle procurement and installation strategy including locations and requirements for electric vehicle charging stations
- **Q4 2025:** Bring locational analysis and recommendations forward to Council for information, and future budget considerations
- **Q1 – Q2 2026:** Update procurement plan for future vehicle purchasing and charging station installation
- **Q2 – Q3 2026:** Budget approval for 2026 charging station installations
- **Q1 2027:** Begin implementation of electric vehicle charging stations, and vehicle lifecycle replacements

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Convener:** The Town draws people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator OR Corporate Services

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Building, By-law, Community Services, Fire, Public Works, Legislative Services, Sustainability Coordinator, Parks, Police)
- LUSI and other service providers, for utility advisory

Additional expertise required:

- Municipal fleet electrification advisory and analytics

Community involvement:

- Committee and volunteer group-driven advisors on public-facing elements of the strategy, such as municipal electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including the Zero Emissions Vehicle Sub Committee

Measure of success:

- “Drive Clean” municipal fleet vehicle program scores

Action is complete when:

- Direction established for an electrified municipal fleet by 2050

Links to other actions:

- Develop a Community Energy Plan
- Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process
- Update procurement policy to promote sustainability

Plans and policies:

- *Climate Action Plan (2020)*
- *Corporate Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan (2014)*
- *Electricity Act (1998) – Ontario Regulation 507/18*
- *Vehicle Replacement Bylaw*

Develop municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action aims to update the inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and resource use and establish targets for municipal facility and fleet energy use, water volume savings, and corporate greenhouse gas reductions. Operational, measurement, and retrofit strategies would be developed in response to each of these targets. Completion of this action reinforces the Town’s commitment to the *FCM Partners for Climate Protection Program* and serves as a precursor to a broader *Community Energy Plan*.

Description:

The Town of Cobourg will act as a local leader for implementing greenhouse gas and waste reductions within their own operations through the completion and execution of this reduction framework and its recommitment to the *FCM Partners for Climate Protection Program (PCP)*.

With direction from the *Electricity Act 1998 – Ontario Regulation 507/18*, municipalities and other public institutions are required to submit annual energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions data for the facilities, fleet, and other infrastructure within their portfolio.

In 2014, the Town of Cobourg completed a *Corporate Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan (ECDMP)* with support from LUSI. Updates on implementation outcomes are provided annually.

The 2020 *Climate Action Plan* highlights the actions taken since 2006 to modernize corporate building stock with the aim of improving energy efficiency. A majority of interventions during this time focused on practical improvements to building insulation to minimize costs. Other interventions include energy efficiency through lighting retrofits, low-water consumption fixtures, and small-scale renewable energy generation.

To continue this progress, the Town of Cobourg will develop a municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions arising from Town operations. This action will illustrate the continued commitment to the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration and leadership on sustainable action by ensuring the Town’s own infrastructure and operations are environmentally sustainable.

Key steps:

- **Q4 2023:** Develop project terms of reference
- **Q4 2023:** Recommit to the FCM *Partners for Climate Protection* (PCP) program
- **Q1 2024 – Q2 2024:** Allocate budget and create Request for Proposal for external consultant support
- **Q2 2024 – Q4 2024:** Create a baseline corporate emissions inventory and conduct comparable energy use benchmarking, in support of PCP Milestone 1
- **Q1 – Q2 2025:** Set stepped corporate emissions targets (baseline year, target year, percentage change) adopted through formal resolution, in support of PCP Milestone 2
- **Q2 – Q3 2025:** Develop corporate greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy, respecting municipal facility energy use, water volume savings, waste diversion, and corporate greenhouse gas reductions

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Community Services, Legislative Services, Public Works)

Additional expertise required:

- Corporate energy and waste auditing

Community involvement:

- Committee and volunteer group-driven advisors on public-facing elements of the framework, such as municipal electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Measure of success:

- Decline in year-over-year corporate greenhouse gas emissions and related resource use (i.e. water consumption, waste diversion)

Action is complete when:

- Corporate emissions targets and corresponding reduction strategy in place

Links to other actions:

- Develop a Community Energy Plan
- Create a Fleet Electrification Strategy
- Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process
- Update procurement policy to promote sustainability

Plans and policies:

- *Climate Action Plan* (2020)
- *Corporate Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan* (2014)
- *Electricity Act* (1998) – Ontario Regulation 507/18

Action 10

Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action involves the Town developing an inventory of natural assets for integration into the municipal asset management process. This inventory may be used in future initiatives for maintaining, improving, and monitoring the state of natural environment assets over time.

Description:

Historically, municipalities have used a variety of tools and regulatory measures to protect these assets—including but not limited to wetlands, forests, and waterways—for their ability to fulfill several narrowly defined environmental functions within a local ecosystem that add to recreational value, environmental significance, or are simply deemed unsuitable for development.

As municipalities contend with the impacts of climate change and rising infrastructure costs, natural assets are increasingly viewed as valuable assets that can support a number of core municipal functions.

Integrating natural assets as part of the municipal asset management planning process can help decrease capital investment and operational costs, assist climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, and support service delivery.

As the result of the changing climate, it is imperative to recognize the core environmental systems within which Cobourg exists. By integrating natural assets into the asset management process, the Town has another tool available to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In 2023, a national standard for natural asset inventory management will be released through the CSA (Canadian Standards Association) Group, with support from Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Municipal Natural Assets Initiative. The action will be conducted following the release of this standardized approach to ensure that the national standard can be applied to the Cobourg context. Furthermore, the GRCA has created a preliminary Ecological Land Classification Inventory for the Ganaraska watershed, of which Cobourg is a part. This inventory will be used as part of the implementation of this action.

Key steps:

- **Q4 2025:** Create project terms of reference
- **Q1 2026:** Allocate budget and create Request for Proposal for third-party landscape architect/biologist to provide subject matter expertise and support inventory process
- **Q2 2026 – Q3 2027:** Work collaboratively with the GRCA to refine their existing ecological land classification system digital inventory which identifies local natural assets, their conditions, and the risks they may face
- **Q3 – Q4 2027:** Develop a staff-led maintenance plan to identify priority assets and the extent of maintenance required to support natural asset management
- **Q4 2027:** Determine opportunity costs associated with natural asset management on private lands (i.e. land acquisition, regulation and education, economic instruments, bylaw development)

Role of municipality:

- **Capacity Builder:** The Town of Cobourg improves the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on this shared action.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Community Services

Supporting actors:

- GRCA
- Northumberland County
- Town of Cobourg (Communications, Planning & Development)

Additional expertise required:

- Natural asset valuation

Community involvement:

- Municipal Natural Assets Initiative, for expertise and guidance in action delivery
- GRCA for subject matter expertise, engagement and implementation support
- Local volunteer practitioners (such as Willow Beach Field Naturalists, Cobourg Horticultural Society, Sustainable Cobourg) for subject matter expertise, strategic direction feedback

Measure of success:

- Condition assessment of inventoried natural assets, change over time in four-year increments
- Budget allocation to natural area preservation

Action is complete when:

- Inaugural natural asset inventory process is complete
- Natural asset inventory is integrated into Cobourg's broader municipal asset management system and plan

Links to other actions:

- Pursue naturalization in parks and open spaces
- Create a Land Acquisition Strategy to support land stewardship

Plans and policies:

- *Asset Management Plan for Core Assets* (2022)
- *Urban Forest Management Plan* (2018)
- *Official Plan* (consolidated 2017)
- *Parks Master Plan* (2013)
- *Property Standards Bylaw 18-99*

Action 11

Pursue naturalization in parks and open spaces

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action pursues naturalization in parks and open spaces under the Town’s stewardship through the introduction of naturally occurring indigenous plant, grass, and tree species. This will be conducted as part of planting and maintenance programs in support of the direction first established in the *Urban Forest Management Plan (2018)*. In addition, this action supports community adoption of this approach to landscape management through the introduction of a public education and outreach program that guides landowners through the process to naturalize their own yards.

Description:

Municipalities have a key role to play in the support of biodiversity and ecosystem services. As municipal responsibilities include management of the urban forest, reserved park spaces, stormwater, and general land use, municipalities are well-positioned to integrate biodiversity conservation into both their long-term decision-making and daily operation. It is in this context where naturalization becomes an important tool in the sustainability toolkit to support biodiversity.

In contrast to conventional landscaping in parks and open spaces, these naturalized landscapes are characterized by their ability to:

- reduce maintenance needs
- manage erosion impacts along waterfront corridors

- conserve local biodiversity
- promote habitat continuity
- filter stormwater run-off
- reduce the “urban heat island” effect caused by built-up urban areas and rising temperatures

Urban naturalization creates a sustainable landscape using native plants, grasses, and tree species that reflect the natural heritage of the region. Naturalization may include but is not limited to:

- reduction of turf maintenance to allow grass to grow naturally
- planting of native grasses and trees to support the local ecosystem
- planting of understory (shrubs, trees, and flowers) to promote habitat continuity.

Key steps:

- **Q1 2024:** Create project terms of reference (including surrounding area analysis)
- **Q2 2024:** Identify three parks and/or open spaces to pursue pilot project and review naturalization best practices
- **Q3 2024:** Conduct naturalization of selected public pilot sites
- **Q4 2024:** Evaluate operational effectiveness and conduct public engagement on pilot progress
- **Q1 2025:** Provide update to Cobourg Town Council on pilot results
- **Q1 – Q2 2025:** Develop naturalization guidelines for public lands from pilot results and best practices
- **Q3 – Q4 2025:** Integrate naturalization process into Parks’ planning and operations

Role of municipality:

- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Community Services

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Communications, Sustainability Coordinator, Sustainability Working Group)

Additional expertise required:

- Landscape naturalization principles and practice

Community involvement:

- General public for feedback on pilot projects, outreach for naturalization of private lands
- GRCA, Trent University Environmental & Life Sciences, and local volunteer practitioners for subject matter expertise, engagement, and local and area implementation support
- Indigenous community and Northumberland County for subject matter expertise on Black Oak Savannah

Measure of success:

- Pilot projects are evaluated favourably, with respect to supporting Community Services’ operational goals and receiving positive feedback from the public
- Expansion of education programs through partners such as community programs
- Year-over-year growth of naturalized areas as a percentage of total space under management by Town of Cobourg

Action is complete when:

- Naturalization principles and practices are integrated into parks planning and maintenance processes
- Public is aware of the naturalization process and best practice for those looking to create their own naturalized property

Links to other actions:

- Create an Urban Agriculture Strategy
- Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process
- Create a Land Acquisition Strategy to support land stewardship

Plans and policies:

- *Asset Management Plan for Core Assets (2022)*
- *Urban Forest Management Plan (2018)*
- *Parks Master Plan (2013)*
- *Lot Maintenance Bylaw 18-99 and amendments*

Action 12

Support waste reduction and diversion

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action seeks to provide the guidance, education, and tools necessary to support positive waste diversion habits for residents across Cobourg, particularly those living in multi-family residential buildings.

Description:

The production of waste products is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. This process includes resource extraction, manufacturing, and shipping of goods, followed by their subsequent processing, storage, and decomposition as waste, each contributing to emission rates. Secondary impacts from waste include the loss of land to waste management infrastructure, and negative impacts to air, ecosystem, and water quality that can emerge from poor waste management practices.

In Cobourg, waste is collected and managed by Northumberland County. In 2020, a 47 per cent waste diversion rate was reported; this is well below its targeted goal of 75 per cent diversion of all waste products through composting, recycling, reuse, and repurposing. In medium- and high-density buildings, individuals interested in diverting waste from landfill are often subject to the rules of the building in which they live.

There is a need to ensure current and future planned medium-to-high density residential buildings and areas can support

programming and infrastructure aimed at reducing and diverting waste from landfills. In recognition of this challenge and the waste management structure in which it exists, the Town of Cobourg will work with stakeholders to support waste diversion within existing and planned medium-to-high density multi-family residential buildings in Cobourg.

Several potential strategic options for this action exist:

- Voluntary recycling in multi-family buildings, administered by private industry
- Required on-site waste diversion through established bylaw and administered by private industry
- Required on-site waste diversion through established bylaw and supported by mix of Northumberland County-led and private collection
- Community composting programs

In each instance, the Town of Cobourg would provide support through a combination of education, monitoring, and enforcement.

Key steps:

- **Q2 2024 – Q3 2024:** Evaluate comparative practices in other municipalities with a similar waste management structure
- **Q4 2024:** Evaluate potential strategic options in tandem with Northumberland County
- **Q1 2025 – Q3 2025:** Consult with local property managers and condominium associations, conduct public engagement
- **Q4 2025 – Q1 2026:** Develop joint report on findings to Northumberland County and Town of Cobourg Councils, addressing engagement findings, recommended program design, and costing, for decision

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to our citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Sustainability Coordinator

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg – Legislative Services
- Northumberland County

Community involvement:

- General public, for insight into issues encountered when attempting to divert waste in multi-family housing
- Property management companies and condominium associations, including the Northumberland Landlords Association

Measure of success:

- Community-wide waste diversion rate, as reported by Northumberland County

Action is complete when:

- Waste diversion programs are supported within multi-family housing in Cobourg

Links to other actions:

- Develop a Community Energy Plan
- Develop a municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy

Plans and policies:

- *Northumberland County Bylaw 2018-22*, respecting the collection of household waste and recyclable materials



Action 13

Update procurement policy to promote sustainability

Category:

Operations & Service Delivery

This action aims to ensure the Town of Cobourg has a sustainable procurement policy in place, and that decisions in support of culturally, socially, economic, and environmentally sustainable operations are made every day.

Description:

Procurement policy colours the day-to-day operation of any large organization, ranging from the purchasing of goods (such as additional vehicles for the municipal fleet) to the commissioning of services delivered by third-party contractors.

Given the sizable influence on the selection of goods and services, the concept of sustainable procurement is an important area of focus for any organization aiming to minimize negative impacts while promoting sustainability.

ISO 20400 defines sustainable procurement as the “process of making purchasing decisions that meet an organization’s needs for goods and services in a way that benefits not only the organization but society as a whole, while minimizing its impact on the environment.”¹¹

The Town of Cobourg will update its existing procurement policies to support sustainable decision-making when buying goods, selecting service providers, and working with third-party vendors in support of both long-term initiatives and day-to-day operations.

Following the first five-year implementation interval, the Town will consider membership in the Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement (CCSP) to gain access to a network of Canadian municipalities contending with sustainable procurement opportunities and challenges.

Key steps:

- **Q4 2022:** Hire Procurement Manager using existing 2022 budget cycle allocation
- **Q2 – Q3 2023:** As part of internal purchasing and procurement strategy development, determine sustainable procurement approach and evaluation criteria
- **Q4 2023 – Q1 2024:** Update procurement bylaw with consideration of results from previous step
- **Q2 2024:** Updated purchasing and procurement strategy and bylaw in place for implementation
- **Q1 2028:** Evaluate membership in Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement during next implementation interval

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to our citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Corporate Services

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Legislative Services)
 - » Each department conducts its own procurement

Measure of success:

- Development of a High Impact Procurement Opportunity (HIPO) list to shape prioritization of sustainable procurement opportunities
- Rate of staff receiving in-house sustainable procurement training to deliver their own procurement processes
- Number and dollar value of solicitations including sustainability criteria
- Percentage of sustainable spend by dollar amount
- Types and quantities of sustainable products used in municipal operation
- Reductions in material use generated by sustainable procurement policy

Action is complete when:

- Sustainable procurement principles and practices are integrated into an updated *Town Purchasing Policy Bylaw* under active implementation
- Monitoring of procurement impacts captured under “Develop Municipal Greenhouse Gas and Waste Reduction Framework” action

Links to other actions:

- Develop municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy

Plans and policies:

- *Town of Cobourg Purchasing Policy Bylaw 06-2012*

Action 14

Create funding pathways to retrofit public and private building stock

Category:
Urban Development

This action aims to unlock future grant opportunities for building retrofits through pilot project delivery and incremental testing. This action builds on the momentum first established in the deep energy retrofit feasibility study.

Description:

In 2020, the Town of Cobourg entered into an agreement with the FCM to assess the feasibility of a deep energy retrofit financing program accessible to low-income neighbourhoods with the aim of promoting cultural, economic, environmental, and social sustainability in Cobourg. This initiative was made possible through the FCM’s Community Efficiency Financing (CEF) program to support energy performance upgrades to Canada’s housing stock. It included an assessment of the retrofit potential of housing within the community and an evaluation of how different financing models may be used to support low-income homeowners and renters with the retrofit process.

The timing of this initiative also coincides with the federal-level development of a nationwide *Green Building Strategy* (in development as of 2023) to support building retrofits. These planning grant opportunities often precede implementation grant money that can only be accessed if a planning exercise has been undertaken, hence the creation of this plan, the Green Energy Retrofit Study, and the Green Development Standards.

To continue the forward momentum for energy-efficient building development and retrofitting, the Town of Cobourg will pursue the creation of new funding pathways to support this effort.

This may include but is not limited to the pursuit of the next step in the FCM’s CEF initiative focused on program design. This step places the feasibility study in the context of stakeholder needs and municipal priorities to generate an approach to implementation and a performance measurement reflective of the organizational and lived realities of Cobourg. The program design evaluation may include, but is not limited to:

- identification of target audience and participant eligibility funding sources and municipal budget allocation
- terms and conditions for recommended financing models
- program activities
- program setup and management, and
- risk management

Key steps:

- **Q4 2023:** Identify potential funding opportunities to finance the retrofits for Cobourg's building stock, including the FCM CEF program
- **Q1 – Q2 2024:** Develop program design application for CEF program
- **Q4 2024:** If application successful, create Request for Proposal for external consultant support and release for tender
- **Q1 2025 – Q1 2026:** Conduct program design evaluation study according to terms established in FCM application to create technical standards

Role of municipality:

- **Advocate:** The Town of Cobourg seeks to influence decisions and policy through an organized effort.
- **Capacity Builder:** The Town of Cobourg improves the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on this shared action.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.
- **Service Delivery:** The Town of Cobourg provides services directly to citizens or customers.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Planning & Development

Supporting actors:

- LUSI
- Northumberland County
- Town of Cobourg (Corporate Services, Legislative Services, Planning & Development)

Additional expertise required:

- Program design for an energy-efficient building financing initiative

Community involvement:

- Municipalities within the FCM undergoing or having undergone the same process
- Social support and housing assistance agencies, to understand participant eligibility and client experience journeys within a prospective system
- Labourers International Union of North America (LIUNA), Local 183, to understand workforce training needs of area trades

Measure of success:

- Workforce training needs identified through stakeholder consultation
- Common client journeys mapped as part of program design system understanding
- Program approach, implementation plan, and performance criteria confirmed

Action is complete when:

- Program design evaluation is completed to the satisfaction of the FCM as grant provider and Cobourg Town Council as the approving authority

Links to other actions:

- Develop a Community Energy Plan
- Develop municipal greenhouse gas and waste reduction strategy

Plans and policies:

- *Green Energy Retrofit Feasibility Study (2023)*
- *Climate Action Plan (2020)*
- *Official Plan (consolidated 2017)*

Action 15

Create a working group to guide energy-efficient urban development

Category:
Urban Development

A sustainable building practices working group will be established to provide strategic direction and input into the implementation of the GDS. The group’s participants will ensure that feedback from various stakeholders can be integrated into the GDS process, and that adequate training and educational opportunities can be provided to support sustainable building practices.

Description:

The Town of Cobourg’s GDS and continuing review of deep energy retrofits provide the policy instruments and organizational understanding to integrate energy-efficient building techniques and technologies into the planning and development process. For these items to be truly realized and effective, additional support is required at the point of practical implementation.

The Town of Cobourg will engage educational institutions within the region, industry and environmental-focused groups, and labour unions to form a sustainable building working group. The role of this multidisciplinary working group will be to provide strategic direction as sustainable building practices are implemented with greater frequency.

Each of the group’s members will provide a perspective rooted in their own industry and practice, including:

- **Town staff:** compliance with the GDS, assessment of implementation gaps

- **Industry groups:** experience with GDS implementation from the development industry
- **Educational institutions:** training requirements for prospective trades implementing sustainable building practices in construction projects
- **Labour unions:** member feedback and recommendations for improvement as “on-the-ground” implementers
- **Environmental non-government organizations:** subject matter experts in environmental practices, and leading environmental practices
- **Conservation Authority:** subject matter experts in natural resource management and land conservation.

Meetings shall be chaired by the attending Town staff member on a twice-annual basis through the implementation period.

Key steps:

- **Q1 2024:** Develop engagement and communication program for key stakeholders (refine as needed each subsequent first quarter), and conduct initial outreach for the year. Repeat each Q1 until 2028.
- **Q2 & Q4 2024:** Host regional working group session to solicit feedback on GDS implementation, identify pain points, and identify how key stakeholders may assist ongoing implementation through their own lines of work. Repeat each Q2 and Q4 until 2028.
- **Q1 2025:** Factor recommendations into ongoing GDS implementation, and reserve larger structural changes for the 2028 five-year GDS review. Repeat each Q1 until 2028.
- **Q1 - Q3 2027:** As part of ICSP review and refresh, integrate reserved changes accumulated over a five-year period into the GDS

Role of municipality:

- **Capacity Builder:** The Town of Cobourg improves the ability of other organizations to deliver and partner on this shared action.
- **Convener:** The Town of Cobourg brings people and organizations together to explore, strategize and work through opportunities and challenges.
- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Educator:** The Town of Cobourg communicates, supports and develops knowledge and understanding.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Planning & Development

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg (Economic Development, Public Works)

Community involvement:

Key stakeholders to provide input into Green Development Standards and retrofit practices, including but not limited to:

- GRCA
- Northumberland Builders and Construction Association
- Northumberland Hills Association of Realtors
- LIUNA Local 183
- Fleming College School of Trades and Technology

Measure of success:

- Feedback from stakeholders incorporated into GDS during regular review periods

Action is complete when:

- Two working group sessions are held each year to provide input into GDS and retrofit implementation

Links to other actions:

- Create funding pathways to retrofit public and private building stock

Plans and policies:

- *Green Development Standards (2022)*
- *Green Energy Retrofit Feasibility Study (2022)*
- *Climate Action Plan (2020)*

Action 16

Create a Land Acquisition Strategy to support land stewardship

Category:
Urban Development

This action will lead to a Land Acquisition Strategy to provide direction for the strategic acquisition of lands to support the growth and maintenance of Cobourg’s parks and open space system, both for recreational use and ecosystem support. This action builds upon the fact that the Town and conservation authority are already using flood mapping to determine where growth and development is permitted.

Description:

The Town of Cobourg will create a land acquisition strategy (LAS) to ensure Cobourg’s parks and open space network can best support and enhance its recreational and quality of life mandates while also promoting biodiversity conservation, mitigating erosion and flood risks. This will ensure community resilience, improve public access to natural areas, and mitigate climate change effects.

The LAS will establish land acquisition requirements based on expected service levels within new and existing neighbourhoods, habitat connectivity and contribution to natural heritage preservation, climate change mitigation potential, and acquisition and holding costs.

The LAS will support the development approvals process in Cobourg, providing Town staff with additional decision-making tools, policies, and processes that will be used to support the acquisition of parkland and open space through the dedication or purchase at time of subdivision, and the strategic purchase of key lands that could not be acquired through other means.

The LAS will support the retention of ecologically sensitive and hazardous lands determined in the flood and erosion risk mapping by the GRCA within Cobourg’s boundaries that might otherwise be lost to urban development.

The strategy development work plan can include, but is not limited to:

- analysis of current land inventory and guiding strategic documents
- review of the GRCA's hazard risk mapping and Natural Heritage System mapping
- review of County's Natural Heritage System mapping
- creation (or review and validation) of demand projections and land requirements in context
- best practice review of municipal land acquisition approaches
- strategy and funding model development for land acquisition scenarios
- public and key stakeholder consultation (with regard to conservation and infrastructure needs)

Key steps:

- **Q3 2026 – Q4 2026:** Create project terms of reference, allocate budget, and create Request for Proposal for external consultant support
- **Q1 2027:** Develop project work plan
- **Q2 2027 – Q4 2027:** Create strategy in accordance with established workplan
- **Q1 2028:** Present LAS to Cobourg Town Council for decision during next implementation interval

Role of municipality:

- **Coordinator:** The Town of Cobourg supports various individuals and organizations to align and coordinate initiatives, programs, funding, etc.
- **Planner/Regulator:** The Town of Cobourg develops plans, policies and regulations that provide internal direction while also guiding the actions of others.

Action owner:

- Town of Cobourg – Planning & Development

Supporting actors:

- Town of Cobourg – Community Services
- GRCA

Additional expertise required:

- Ecologically sensitive and hazardous land mapping
- Financing model for municipal land acquisition

Community involvement:

- GRCA, for input into land acquisition prioritization based on ecological land conservation criteria

Measure of success:

- Increase in the total area of ecologically sensitive lands under management by the Town of Cobourg for public and conservation uses

Action is complete when:

- Land Acquisition Strategy is created and approved by Cobourg Town Council; in ongoing implementation phase

Links to other actions:

- Integrate natural assets into the municipal asset management process
- Pursue naturalization in parks and open spaces

Plans and policies:

- *Urban Forest Management Plan (2018)*
- *Official Plan (consolidated 2017, sec. 4.7.1)*
- *Parks Master Plan (2013)*
- *Cobourg East Community Secondary Plan (2005)*
- *Waterfront District Plan*

3.3 Closing

With the inaugural Integrated Community Sustainability Plan in place, the Town and community of Cobourg will build upon its legacy of sustainable action and continue to effect positive change towards the ICSP's long-term vision. Implementation of the plan will be a continual process of iteration and refinement that will support the key actions and the ongoing delivery of day-to-day municipal services to meet the needs of all residents.

The Town and community of Cobourg will revisit the ICSP at the conclusion of the first implementation period in 2027 to celebrate progress, honour its champions, and adapt the plan to new realities and opportunities yet unknown.

In the meantime, let's get to work.





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4.0

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Additional research conducted during preceding May 2022

"Sustainability Snapshot" document development process.



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Appendices

Appendix A: Policy Framework

The following appendix explores the existing policy framework for the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and highlights how each document in the framework connects to the plan.

Tannery District Sustainable Neighbourhood Secondary & Master Plans (2021)

With the intention of becoming Cobourg's first truly sustainable neighbourhood, the Tannery District is at the forefront of translating sustainability principles into the built environment and will shape the lived experience of sustainability for Cobourgiens. These principles aim to reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources; minimize material waste; create livable and productive environments, and reduce the creation of greenhouse gas emissions.

Connection to the ICSP: The *Tannery District Neighbourhood Secondary & Master Plans* provide a tangible application of the sustainable built environment goals and related actions contained in the ICSP which can provide a template for sustainable neighbourhood design. The actions within the ICSP focused on urban development and the built environment, and the concurrent Green Development Standards will help further guide the implementation of the Secondary & Master Plans.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (2021)

Following a resolution by Cobourg Town Council and membership in the nationwide Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities, the Town and its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Committee has established an *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy* for the period 2022 to 2026. The Strategy will see the Town strengthen EDI within its own organization; assess the goods, programs, services, and information provided by Town staff for its alignment with the diverse needs of Cobourgiens, and increase collaboration and the promotion of inclusivity with external stakeholders.

Connection to the ICSP: Equity, diversity and inclusion issues were common themes emerging in the preparation of the ICSP. It is embedded in the dimension of cultural and social sustainability with respect to the dignity of all persons, and was present in public feedback that advocated for just and equitable progress towards a sustainable future. Actions present in the ICSP will be delivered in accordance with the principles and direction found in the EDI Strategy.

Affordable and Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan (2020)

The 2019 *Cobourg Affordable Housing Strategy* introduced the use of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to allow affordable housing development incentives in support of the increased development of affordable and rental housing in Cobourg.

The subsequent *Affordable and Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan* was approved by Cobourg Town Council in late 2020. The plan provides incentives for the creation of new affordable and rental housing, and guides the implementation of well-designed sustainable and universally accessible spaces for both new development and redevelopment projects in Cobourg.

Connection to the ICSP: Affordability and access to housing was a key theme in the ICSP planning process. Contemporary housing and economic data and public feedback each suggested that the ICSP should address housing affordability.

Moreover, the multi-faceted nature of sustainability raises the importance of balancing economic conditions and environmental progress; retrofitting existing housing stock and building new sustainable communities cannot be done in such a way that it reduces housing affordability in Cobourg even further.

Due to its recency, the CIP will remain the primary tool with which the Town makes progress towards housing affordability. Direction from the GDS and an eventual community energy financing program will be factored into affordable and attainable housing development to ensure it fulfills multiple dimensions of sustainability initiatives.

Climate Action Plan (2020)

The *Climate Action Plan* (CAP) builds upon a prior planning initiative in 2010 and decades of work to inventory community and corporate greenhouse gas emissions, and efforts to implement various interventions to reduce or offset greenhouse gas emissions within Cobourg.

The CAP promotes action in the areas of housing, transit, and community infrastructure. It includes direction to electrify the municipal fleet where possible, support deep energy efficiency retrofits for low-income housing, support sustainable community development through a number of best practices, and introduce the GDS. The CAP was a product of the Town of Cobourg's membership in the FCM *Partners for Climate Protection* program, which included a community energy benchmarking exercise using 2018 data.

Connection to the ICSP: The ICSP traces its roots from the CAP and can be viewed as a companion document; the former now provides high-level strategic guidance across the different dimensions of sustainability while the latter is concerned primarily with implementation of technical climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to the benefit of the environmental dimension of sustainability. The ICSP continues to advance parts of the CAP with focus on actions to implement a municipal greenhouse gas reduction framework (including development of a fleet electrification strategy), promote active transportation use through new infrastructure and policy planning, and continued support for deep energy retrofits through program design. Actions from the CAP not included in the ICSP should still be attended to through implementation of the former.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020–2024 (2020)

The current *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* renews the Town of Cobourg commitment to remove and otherwise prevent accessibility barriers in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA, 2005).

This plan is reflective of a broader effort to foster accessibility and universal access in Cobourg, including the regular meeting of an Accessibility Advisory Committee, mechanisms to report barriers to accessibility, and continued review of the Town’s service delivery for accessibility compliance. Action items for the current implementation period are categorized within information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces, and customer service.

Connection to the ICSP: As with equity, diversity and inclusion issues, universal access emerged as a key consideration through both the preliminary review and public engagement components of the ICSP planning process. As sustainability is a shared initiative, there is an imperative to ensure that the products resulting from the ICSP are accessible to all Cobourgians, whether that be a new piece of active transportation infrastructure or a community garden.

The resulting services, infrastructure, and processes emerging from the ICSP will follow the general requirements and objectives established in the current *Accessibility Plan*; the plan document itself is designed to exceed the compliance requirements established in the AODA.

Cultural Master Plan (2018)

The Town of Cobourg’s *Cultural Master Plan* provides a strategic direction for leadership and investment in the local cultural sector. The plan comprises a vision, roles and responsibilities, and a framework for action to grow and support cultural activity in Cobourg for its own sake, as support well as to leverage it to support broader economic and social development objectives.

Connection to the ICSP: The *Cultural Master Plan* effectively fulfills the cultural dimension of sustainability. In addition, it provides a vehicle to mobilize community and cultural groups for sustainable impact. Embedding sustainability as a central idea within the cultural groups, enterprises, and landscapes that Cobourgians access regularly will help make the overarching concept of sustainability more appreciable and relatable to community members.

Instead of seeing sustainability as a predominantly technical and inaccessible set of processes undertaken by municipal staff, industry professionals, and specialized volunteer groups, community members may instead see sustainability as a tangible concept in which they can play an influencing role, and one that has a positive impact in their personal lives and communities.

Urban Forest Management Plan (2018)

The Town of Cobourg's *Urban Forest Management Plan* (UFMP) establishes the strategic (long-term) and operational (day-to-day) direction and guidelines for the management of Cobourg's forestry assets. Approved by Cobourg Town Council in 2018, the UFMP establishes its primary goal for Cobourg to have a "healthy and sustainable urban forest that contributes to the economic, environmental, and social vitality of the Town."

To realize this goal, the UFMP establishes the context for urban forest management, a set of objectives and related key actions, and a series of programs and plans necessary to maintain and grow Cobourg's forest assets. Notably, the plan advances a tree canopy target of 35 per cent coverage by 2050.

Connection to the ICSP: Stewardship of Cobourg's forestry assets is an important part of a broader climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy, while also ensuring a high quality of life for Cobourgiens. A healthy and abundant urban forest provides a range of benefits across the dimensions of sustainability, including stormwater management, air quality, habitat contiguity, microclimate regulation, and quality of life and aesthetic concerns.

The ICSP and the related GDS provide a range of interventions that support the continued stewardship of the urban forest, including naturalization opportunities, natural asset management, and application of low-impact development principles. Related actions conducted in the ICSP will follow the strategic direction established by the preceding UFMP.

Downtown Cobourg Master Plan (2016)

The 2016 *Downtown Cobourg Master Plan* provides a 20-year plan for the revitalization of Downtown Cobourg. Building on the existing direction present in the Town's *Official Plan* and other planning and economic development initiatives, the *Master Plan* marries high-level strategy with low-level urban design guidelines and implementation tools to support community development and economic growth at the centre of Cobourg.

Connection to the ICSP: The *Downtown Cobourg Master Plan's* emphasis on sustainable development provides a possible template to follow in the design of new neighbourhoods and retrofit, and the revitalization of existing neighbourhoods in accordance with sustainability principles. Continued implementation of the *Master Plan* will be done in accordance with the vision and goals established in the ICSP and the low-level redevelopment requirements established in the concurrently prepared GDS.

Heritage Master Plan (2015)

The *Heritage Master Plan* establishes an overall vision and six targeted goals for the stewardship of built and unbuilt heritage assets in Cobourg.

Connection to the ICSP: Heritage conservation and sustainability are closely linked. By serving as visual reminders of Cobourg's past, the municipality's built heritage properties and heritage sites are direct examples of cultural sustainability. However, they also can illustrate the relationship between heritage preservation and environmental sustainability through greater attention to the concept of construction and demolition waste reduction, as well as the energy embedded in the construction of buildings.

Corporate Energy and Demand Management Plan (2014)

The *Corporate Energy and Demand Management Plan* provides the basis for energy management and conservation within the Town of Cobourg's municipal operations, including its facilities and fleet. As a public institution in Ontario, the Town of Cobourg is required to submit energy use data reports in support of this plan as directed by the *Electricity Act 1998*.

Connection to the ICSP: The established reporting and management mechanisms in the *Corporate Energy and Demand Management Plan* ensures the ICSP has a firm foundation on which to continue the Town of Cobourg's energy (and by extension, emissions) reduction initiatives. The ICSP includes as key actions the development of a municipal greenhouse gas emissions reduction framework and the creation of a *Community Energy Plan* to update the existing plan and provide a clear and structured approach for the continued reduction of energy use.

Parks Master Plan (2013)

The *Parks Master Plan* provides a framework to grow the public parks and open space system in Cobourg in support of enhanced community quality of life and a sense of place.

Connection to the ICSP: Cobourg's parks and open space system is a vital part of the community and Town's shared commitment to sustainability. Implementation of the ICSP will defer to the high-level strategic direction established in the *Parks Master Plan*. The ICSP will support the continued stewardship of the parks and open space system through the delivery of actions focused on natural asset management, habitat restoration and naturalization, and community-led urban agriculture initiatives.

Transportation Master Plan (2011)

The *Transportation Master Plan* (TMP) provides long-term direction for the development of Cobourg's transportation network, while addressing the quality of life and safety issues identified by Cobourg residents. The TMP includes direction for sustainable land use and transportation design, including reduced automobile dependency, redevelopment of neighbourhoods in alignment with accessibility principles, and support for active transportation. The current TMP is the first of its kind to advocate for a comprehensive active transportation network, providing direction for cycle track infrastructure on arterial roads and the off-road "Greenland" system.

Connection to the ICSP: The ICSP represents another opportunity to advocate for and support active transportation through improvements to pedestrian and cycle-based infrastructure as a means to support community health, provide congestion relief, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The ICSP includes high-level goals to design neighbourhoods to better support Cobourgians' ability to travel via active and sustainable modes of transportation. In addition, actions focused on active transportation and greenhouse gas reduction frameworks will see updates to the TMP to ensure guidelines and plans for a comprehensive active transportation network are established in the document.

Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the role of the ICSP?

The ICSP is the Town of Cobourg's primary strategic plan to support community sustainability and responsible urban development and governance for the next 30 years. The ICSP will inform the Town's policy framework by providing direction to other guiding documents, including the Town's *Official Plan*. Direction in this iteration of the ICSP is focused on the first implementation interval.

Why have an ICSP in addition to existing plans and sustainability initiatives?

The introduction of an ICSP follows established directions in the Town of Cobourg's *Official Plan* and *Climate Action Plan*, and the 2019 Council Resolution declaring a climate emergency. The ICSP provides a centralized framework and long-term vision for sustainable action that unites these disparate plans, policies, initiatives, and community-led actions under a common banner to maximize the potential for positive impact.

What is the role of the Green Development Standards?

Green development standards (GDS) are "voluntary or mandatory measures developed by municipalities to encourage developers and builders to create thoughtful and innovative developments using sustainable design, which considers the principles of economic, social, and ecological sustainability." A municipal GDS is used to protect ecosystems, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, support healthy community development, and adapt to (or mitigate) the impacts of climate change.

An effective GDS program provides a review framework that supports effective decision-making in the planning and development process and connects the high-level sustainability goals established in the *Official Plan* and ICSP with the practical details of individual development applications. As such, the GDS provides practical direction to both the development industry representatives and municipal planners, so that urban development ultimately supports municipal sustainability goals and the overarching response to the climate emergency.

Supporting the GDS is an accompanying GDS Manual and Checklist for developer and staff clarity and process.

What is the role of the Green Energy Retrofits?

With funding from the FCM, the Town of Cobourg has undertaken a feasibility study to explore the prospect of a "deep energy retrofit" financing program for low-income rental communities within Cobourg. A deep energy retrofit study refers to the introduction of relevant tools, technologies, operational techniques, and management processes to reduce energy use and improve the energy performance of buildings.

The study assessed Cobourg's housing stock from a perspective of its cumulative energy retrofit potential and explored how financing can be best positioned to reduce barriers to such a program.

Is the ICSP a statutory plan?

Unlike the *Official Plan*, the ICSP is not a statutory plan. That means that while this plan will influence Council and administration decisions, it does not hold the same power as a plan instituted under the *Planning Act* or *Municipal Act*.

What are this plan's effects on greenhouse gas emissions?

The overall aim of the ICSP is to reduce both corporate- (Town) and community-based greenhouse gas emissions through a number of different approaches that range from improving energy efficiency within corporate buildings to reducing the need for travel by car within Cobourg. While some actions explicitly focus on greenhouse gas emission reduction, others support the aim without explicit reference, such as the action respecting electric vehicles.

Notably, the ICSP also includes focus on climate change adaptation. As climate change becomes more severe, it is not enough to exclusively focus on greenhouse gas reduction. We also must prepare our built and social infrastructure for increasingly unpredictable weather events.

Why does the ICSP contain recommendations to update or supplement some of the listed plans but not others?

The existing plans, policies, or initiatives that are explicitly targeted for an update as part of the ICSP implementation process are those where the most time has elapsed since their approval and the introduction of the ICSP; these plans would likely require an update even if the ICSP was not in place. The ICSP provides an opportunity to incorporate a sustainability focus into the refresh of these key documents.

How can I get involved in making Cobourg more sustainable?

There are a number of ways to get involved to make the Town more sustainable. In this plan, two actions that are identified to include more community voices in sustainability planning: the annual growth, development, and sustainability and the sustainability champions program.

Both programs are intended to introduce new action ideas and increase awareness of the work being done in Cobourg to support sustainable outcomes. There are also a series of existing community groups and Committees of Council working to make Cobourg a more sustainable place. One example includes the Sustainability & Climate Change Emergency Advisory Committee, which is a committee of Council; citizen members are appointed every four years.

Where can I find specific built form policies like low impact development?

Look to the Green Development Standards described in the GDS question above.

How were actions in the ICSP chosen?

Using the co-developed vision and goals from phase one, a variety of engagement, policy, current initiative and strategic analysis was conducted to create an initial list of actions for considerations in the ICSP. The majority of actions chosen were those which were either in the Town's area of control or influence.

Many elements of sustainability fall outside of this area of influence, including producer restrictions and household consumption patterns. For these larger-scale initiatives, other orders of government and community intervention is required, and therefore, they were not included as actions within this plan.

