



To: Climate Protection Working Group
From: Richard Grant, Planner I
Date: December 10th, 2024
Title: Climate Lens Tool Policy Framework (Draft)

Recommendation: THAT the Climate Protection Working Group receive report CPWG-2024-016 “Climate Lens Toolkit Policy Framework” for information

Purpose: To provide the Working Group with a draft policy framework for a Climate Lens Toolkit. This policy framework functions as the foundation for the Climate Lens Toolkit.

Background:

Climate Lens Policy

At its core, a Climate Lens is an assessment framework designed to help decision-makers understand the emerging exigent risks of the climate crisis and the impacts associated with their decision. The Toolkit is one such method designed to allow one to identify opportunities to reduce emissions, enhance climate resilience, and contribute to a more sustainable future in alignment with the Town’s climate goals. The Toolkit prompts users to consider whether any such plans, policies, and/or projects in use or proposed may negatively affect the climate through the production of greenhouse gas emissions or be affected by the climate crisis through a myriad of variables that often work in tandem, such as temperature or precipitation.

Analysis and Options:

Climate Lens Toolkit Framework

The Climate Lens Toolkit is comprised of three components outlined below:

1. Climate Crisis Assessment Questionnaire
2. Greenhouse gas emissions calculator
3. Council Report Template Update - “Climate Crisis Impact”

Climate Crisis Questionnaire (CCQ)

The Climate Crisis Questionnaire is a series of questions designed to assess the nature of the proposed project or initiative. If any proposed project or initiative produces GHG emissions, one must complete the assessment questionnaire. To use the Climate Lens Toolkit, users would first complete a Climate Crisis Assessment Questionnaire (CCQ) to ensure its applicability to their project or plan.

The Climate Lens tool would be used for projects or initiatives that fall under one or more of the following categories:

- Corporate/Town Strategic Plan Projects or Initiatives (external)
- Project or initiative that is community-facing and impacts residents
- Corporate/Town-wide initiative (internal)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Calculator

A greenhouse gas emissions calculator will be used to assess the impacts of climate change. The emissions calculator is an Excel spreadsheet that calculates GHG emissions and costs adapted after a module created by Robert Argue, a local environmentalist. The emissions calculator allows municipalities to demonstrate a certain degree of accountability regarding their climate commitments and actions. It requires one to answer a fundamental question, “What is the impact of climate change from this decision?”

Council Report Template Update “Climate Crisis Impact”

If adopted, reports written for Council will be updated to include a new “Climate Crisis Impact” section to help them understand the climate and sustainability impacts of decisions (where applicable). This section will have two subcomponents: (1) link to the Climate Action Plan and (2) estimated amount of GHG emissions (if applicable).

Example: Electric Fleet Acquisition Request from the Dept. of Public Works & Utilities

The Department of Public Works wants to acquire a fleet of seven electric service vehicles for the new year. In this scenario, Staff will be directed to the Climate Crisis Questionnaire (CCQ) and prompted to calculate the estimated emissions from the Emissions Calculator. The CCQ will be used to assess the potential climate impacts from this acquisition and its link to the Town’s Climate Action Plan. The Emissions Calculator will be used to determine the amount of GHG emissions that would be produced from the seven electric vehicles.

Next Steps

Incorporating a climate lens perspective into municipal decision-making processes enables its systematic integration into policy, planning, and infrastructure development at the municipal level, thus facilitating more climate-conscious choices. The Climate Lens Toolkit helps Staff and Council identify the potential pros and cons of a decision on GHG emissions and climate risk. It requires staff to demonstrate careful consideration of climate change impacts across all municipal decision-making.

It should be clarified that the Climate Lens Toolkit will be available for all Staff to use; however, it will be instrumental in implementing the Climate Action Plan, as it requires users to align their plans, projects, and policy decisions with it.

Develop Draft Before Seeking CPWG Feedback

Staff will continue to develop this draft policy framework for the Climate Lens Toolkit. Once finalized, it will be brought to the Working Group for review and feedback. The Working Group will be granted a final review before it is brought forward to Council for adoption. At that point, Staff will seek a resolution from the Working Group to bring it forward to Council (with the Working Group’s endorsement).

Toolkit Implementation

To facilitate its adoption, a series of workshops designed and delivered by Staff to educate the Town’s workforce and Council on using the Climate Lens Toolkit will be held. Staff are considering a trial period of a year to measure the Toolkit's success by assessing the number of reports using the “Climate Crisis Impact” section and providing a satisfaction survey to determine user satisfaction with it, which may inform amendments to the [policy and/or toolkit] or operational process..

Respectfully Submitted:
Original copy signed

Richard Grant
Planner I

Reviewed by:
Original copy signed

Karl Grenke, MCIP, RPP
Manager, Development Services

Appendix 'A' – Climate Crisis Questionnaire (draft)

Climate Lens Tool – Climate Crisis Assessment Questionnaire

Project Overview

Project Title: _____

Project Description: _____

Department: _____

Project Start Date: _____

Climate Criss Assessment

1. What is the plan/policy or decision under review? _____

2. Will this project produce or reduce GHG emissions

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure
- d. Not applicable

3. If Yes, what is the anticipated GHG emissions produced? _____ Tons of CO₂.
To estimate the anticipated GHG emissions, please use the **Project GHG Emissions calculator**

4. Can the plan/project or decision be adjusted to reduce GHG emissions?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure
- d. Not applicable

5. If Yes, please elaborate below

6. Does this project align with the Town's Climate Action Plan?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure
- d. Not applicable

7. If Yes, what are the goal(s) identified in the Climate Action Plan to be completed?
To review the Climate Action Plan, please click this link.

8. What are the potential environmental benefits of completing the proposed project or plan?

9. Are there plans to reduce or offset GHG emissions generated by the construction or over the lifetime of the project/plan (including renewable energy)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure
- d. Not applicable

10. If Yes, please elaborate below
