



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Graham Seaman, Director, Sustainability & Asset Management, Phoebe Fu, Director, Environmental Services

Copy To: Andy Taylor, CAO, Trinela Cane, Commissioner, Corporate Services

Prepared by: Jennifer Wong, Sustainability Coordinator, Rob Grech, Manager, Stormwater

Date: July 7, 2020

Re: City of Markham Feedback on the Draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the memo titled “Draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan” from City Staff be received and forwarded to York Region.

BACKGROUND:

On April 2, 2020, Regional Council circulated the draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix A) to the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Lake Simcoe and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and local municipalities with a request for comments.

The draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan was brought forward to General Committee on May 4, 2020 with the motion for the plan to be referred to staff for further analysis, comments and recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Staff from Sustainability & Asset Management and Environmental Services have reviewed the plan and provide the following comments for York Region:

- The draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan aligns with Markham’s Municipal Energy Plan (MEP) – Getting to Zero goal of net zero emissions by 2050
- We recommend the following additions to the Plan:

- Acknowledge in the plan that Markham and other York Region municipalities have similar plans and goals to show strategic alignment;
- Highlights and key elements from local municipal plans, such as Markham's MEP, should be summarized in York Region's Climate Change Action Plan;
- Provide a clear explanation on how the integration of this plan will inform other York Region strategic plans moving forward;
- Provide policies and actions to support new developments to build to net zero ready standards to prepare for the Province of Ontario's net zero energy ready housing objectives anticipated to be in the Ontario Building Code by 2030;
- Items For Consideration:
 - On Page 7, the document states that Southern Ontario, including York Region, saw more frequent and powerful rain and snow storms. This finding is contrary to previous findings of City of Markham (<https://www.chijournal.org/C449>), which found no statistically significant change in short duration rain frequencies over a similar period;
 - The document makes several references to a projection of a 33% increase in the intensity of extreme storms, including within an infographic ('Warmer, Wetter, Wilder'). In checking document references, the 33% increase refers to the number of days with more than 20mm of rainfall, which, is significantly different than the intensity. Furthermore, the Ontario Climate Consortium document that was referenced in the plan concludes that changes in extreme precipitation intensity are unclear;
 - The differences between precipitation intensity and number of days with more than 20mm are significant, because the peak intensity value during an extreme storm is used to size drainage systems (and would be used as part of the stress testing exercise recommended by the Region). The number of rain days with more than 20mm is typically not used as part of this exercise; and,
 - Markham staff would suggest that either the wording be changed, or an asterisk be used to denote that the 33% intensity increase actually refers to number of days with 20mm or more of rainfall as to ensure that there is not confusion about how this is used in future

CONCLUSION

The draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan thoughtfully combines climate change mitigation (reduction of emissions) and adaptation (reduce impacts of climate change).

Sustainability & Asset Management Department Staff will continue to participate in the York Region Climate Change Working Group to represent Markham as necessary and to support the implementation of the York Region Climate Action Plan.

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – Draft York Region Climate Change Action Plan