

Caledon works on plan to reach net-zero gas emissions by 2050

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

The Town of Caledon has been working to update its Community Climate Change Action Plan to secure a safe and greener future for Caledon.

Resilient Caledon, which launched back in October, has gathered data and studies through engagement with the community, as well as researching how the Caledon community can make better use of energy, reduce greenhouse gas, and better prepare the climate change.

The Community Climate Action Plan was first put in place back in 2010 to tackle climate change issues such as transportation, green development, energy, schools, agriculture, community awareness, tree planting, waste, local food and long-term actions.

Since the launch of Resilient Caledon, staff have done their research, collecting data, engaging with the public through in-person and online interactions, and emission modelling, leaving them to their next time; the plan development.

The Town of Caledon first declared a climate emergency on Jan 28, where council instructed its team of staff to report back to council on what the Town can do in association with the community, to reduce GHG emissions aligned with the 1.5-degree warming scenario as recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Julia Meyer-MacLeod is the Principal from the Sustainability Solutions Group, who is lead consultant on the Community Climate Action Plan update. She presented a report to council on Tuesday June 30, 'Getting to 1.5C: Modelling the Pathway to a Low-Carbon Caledon'.

Meyer-MacLeod explained that the most efficient target for Caledon, is to reach net-zero emissions by the year 2050, which aligns with the Town's emergency declaration.

'When we refer to 1.5 degrees, scientists have concluded that after two degrees warming, the damage from climate change on human and natural systems will be catastrophic, and irreversible and that at 1.5 degree, we give ourselves a better chance of reverting and withstanding these effects,' she explained. 'Those scientists have also determined that in order to stay within 1.5-degree, global emissions must reach net zero by 2050.'

She added, 'This is a target that has now been adopted by the Canadian government and several nearby municipalities including Toronto, Burlington, Halton Hills and others.'

Land use, future buildings, energy production, existing buildings, industries, transportations and waste are all inputs that are analysed to form the modelling process.

'Around 55 percent of emissions from the town are coming from commercial and residential transportation, with 30 per cent coming from commercial and residential buildings. Population and job projections for the Town are more than doubling in the next 20 years alone,' said Meyer-MacLeod.

Resilient Caledon plans to work alongside community groups, residents, businesses and farmers with the support of regional, provincial and federal governments, as well as conservation authorities, to build a community vision. This vision includes action of key factors, such as all residential and commercial buildings becoming zero-carbon therefore no carbon emissions are being produced by the building through space heating ventilation and energy used by appliances for example, cycling and walking as the norm as opposed to gas run vehicles, Caledon's energy supply with zero carbon through renewable energy sources and protecting our natural and agriculture systems.

The next step in the framework is final public consultation, which will be held in September of this year.

“We’re working on the implementation plan through this summer, we’re looking at confirming interim targets for 2030, and exploring an opportunity to adopt an innovative carbon budget approach to support the target,” said Meyer-MacLeod.

She added, “What we’ve seen from our work so far is that this net-zero by 2050 target is not only possible, but it offers an opportunity for the town, its residents and businesses to collectively work towards a vision and share in the benefits that it brings.”

For more information, please visit [Caledon.ca/climatechange](https://caledon.ca/climatechange).