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Report 2024-153

Report Title: Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Funding

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Council Meeting Date: November 20, 2024

**Report Not Considered by
Standing Committee Because:**

- ☒ Time-sensitive Issue (information received too late for Committee consideration)
- ☐ Urgent Matter (issue arose after this month's Committee meeting)
- ☐ Other

Strategic Plan Priorities: ☐ Innovate for Service Excellence
☐ Ignite Economic Opportunity
☐ Foster a Thriving Community
☒ Propel Sustainable Growth
☐ Champion a Vibrant Future

Recommendation

"That County Council having considered Report 2024-153 'Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Funding', direct staff to apply to a funding opportunity from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation initiative for the purpose of developing an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan for Northumberland County."

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek County Council's direction for staff to apply for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding.

Background

Northumberland County is developing a Climate Action Strategy that responds to our strategic plan objective to respond to the climate crisis. The strategy consists of two phases:

1. The Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan. This plan is in the final stages of development and will be brought to the December 18, 2024, meeting of County Council to seek approval.
2. An Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. This plan will be developed throughout 2025.

The purpose of an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan is to address the impacts of a changing climate to the built, social, economic, and environmental systems of Northumberland County. The work undertaken and the measures that will be implemented after development of the plan will help to minimize the negative impacts of climate change by addressing locally identified risks while leveraging local opportunities to increase resilience. Climate change affects everyone, but the impacts are not felt equally amongst all communities, with disproportionate consequences for communities and populations that are already more vulnerable due to systemic inequities.

In March of 2024, Northumberland County was successful in applying to the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) Outreach and Engagement Program. The County is part of a cohort of participants that are working with the ORCCA team to develop an outreach and engagement initiative to meet an adaptation goal. The County is receiving 76 hours of staff support from ORCCA to assist in developing a climate science report and an outreach and engagement strategy for the development of an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. This program came at no cost to the County.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has recently announced Climate-Ready Plans and Processes Funding under the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation initiative for municipalities that are looking to start or strengthen their climate adaptation plans. This funding could support the County's efforts to develop an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. The deadline to submit a funding application is November 29, 2024.

The grant could cover 60% of eligible costs with stackable incentives that are additional to the grant. Staff estimate that 70-85% of costs could be covered through the program if successful.

Consultations

Staff are working with the County's Grant Writer to put forward a funding application before the deadline, should County Council approve moving forward.

An important aspect of an effective adaptation planning process is working together with a variety of partners and stakeholders. An Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group made up of various County staff departments, local municipal staff, and external organizations is being formed. Information provided by the Working Group will help to identify climate impacts and their risks, ideate solutions to address them, and plan for implementation. To date, the working group has confirmed representation from:

- Northumberland County public works, land use planning, emergency planning, paramedic services and natural heritage departments
- Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and Lower Trent Conservation Authority
- Municipality of Port Hope, Municipality of Brighton, Municipality of Trent Hills, and the Township of Cramahe
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Lakefront Utilities and Elexicon Energy
- Blue Dot Northumberland and Community Power Northumberland

Other engagement opportunities, such as one-on-one discussions to gather input from experts and a survey for community input, are expected to occur during plan development.

Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations

Research from the Canadian Climate Institute states that climate change is already costing Canadian households billions of dollars, and that proactive adaptation can dramatically reduce these costs.

The development of an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan will still move forward with existing resources should the FCM funding application not be successful.

Discussion / Options

If successful, the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding will allow the County to purchase a Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) membership from ICLEI Canada for \$25,000. The BARC framework has been used by over 120 Canadian municipalities, including Durham Region and the City of Peterborough, to build an adaptation plan. Through a membership, the County can receive research assistance, planning guidance, and tools and materials to assist in the development of our Adaptation and Resiliency Plan.

Financial Impact

The maximum request through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation Fund is \$105,000, up to approximately 70-85% of eligible costs. The anticipated total project cost is under development and anticipated to be under \$150,000.

Staff remuneration is an eligible expense under the funding program, therefore, the County's potential share of the costs is already budgeted for through the Environmental Officer's remuneration.

Member Municipality Impacts

County staff engaged with local municipal CAOs to identify local municipal staff to join the Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group. Participation on the Working Group is expected to build knowledge and capacity on climate adaptation for member municipal staff. Member municipalities can leverage work completed on developing climate impact statements and assessing vulnerability and risk to inform their adaptation planning efforts.

Conclusion / Outcomes

It is recommended that County Council direct staff to apply for Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation funding for developing an Adaptation and Resiliency Plan for Northumberland County.

Attachments

N/A.