

King moves forward on a climate action plan strategy

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King is moving towards its climate action goals, with the approval of a Climate Action Plan Engagement Strategy. In 2019, council declared a State of Climate Emergency to address the ongoing climate crisis and to join a growing movement across the world to help mitigate climate change. The declaration helped deepen King's commitment to being leaders in the environmental and climate change field. The climate emergency prompted municipalities across the country to develop Climate Change Action Plans and strategies to deal with the emerging climate crisis. The draft King Climate Action Plan (KCAP) was created in 2020, with Green House Gas emission inventory completed followed by community engagement. Between January 2020 and August 2021 consultation was conducted virtually. Due to the pandemic, it was difficult for staff to conduct in-person engagement with youth. The draft KCAP was presented to council in January 2022, where council directed staff to review the comments from deputations and to allow more time for the community to provide feedback. The engagement strategy was created to provide additional opportunity for community consultation with an emphasis on youth (youth is defined as ages 12-29). Staff are continuously providing opportunities for engagement and consultation with citizens in King Township.

Based on feedback provided by council and deputations from the public at the Jan. 24, 2022 council meeting, staff have developed a comprehensive engagement strategy. The goal of the strategy is to ensure meaningful participation from previously underrepresented groups is incorporated into the KCAP while also collecting general feedback from the community at various events and facilities. The King Climate Action Plan Engagement Strategy identifies: Stakeholder groups and individuals; a marketing plan; events that will be attended by staff; how feedback will be integrated into the KCAP. According to Statistics Canada approximately 25% of the Township's population is between the ages of 10-29. In order to ensure youth representation is incorporated into the KCAP, consultation will consist of in-person workshops with the Mayor's Youth Action Team (MYAT), secondary and post-secondary institutions. Also in the works are climate focused activities with King Camps and recreation and nature-based programming. From here, staff will take councillors' feedback and incorporate it into the strategy by the end of the month. Hopes are it can be implemented within the next few months.