



PETERBOROUGH COUNTY

Our History - Your Future

SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN: 2026-2050





MESSAGE FROM THE WARDEN

“Our History – Your Future” is more than our tagline, it is a promise. It reminds us that the decisions we make today will shape the lives of generations to come. Climate change is no longer a distant concern; it is here, impacting our communities, our economy, and our way of life.

This Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan reflects our commitment to innovation, resilience, and leadership. It builds on the progress we have already made—reducing emissions, advancing waste management solutions, and setting measurable targets for a healthier environment. By embracing sustainable practices, we strengthen our local economy, safeguard our natural resources, and ensure a vibrant future for all residents.

Our priorities—responsible growth and development, thriving agriculture, and a strong tourism sector—depend on a healthy environment and resilient communities. Sustainability is the foundation that supports these pillars. It ensures that as we grow, we do so thoughtfully, preserving the character of our County while creating opportunities for future generations.

We recognize that we can learn from traditional knowledge and build a future rooted in respect, understanding, and shared stewardship of the land with Indigenous peoples. Our duty is to act decisively and collaboratively to protect what we value most.

Our history reminds us of where we’ve come from, and our actions today will define where we go. Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities, reduce emissions, and lead by example. Let’s make sustainability the foundation of everything we do for our history, and for your future.

Bonnie Clark

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With deep respect, we acknowledge the lands and interconnected waterways that bind us together, the foundation for all life. These lands serve as a keeper of history and stories and are a source of inspiration.

In recognizing this, we embrace that all living things possess an important energy and purpose. We extend the utmost gratitude to the Original Peoples who have been caretakers of these lands and waters of this region from time immemorial, and to this day who continue this commitment.

Peterborough County's dedication to reconciliation remains steadfast. In this spirit, we are committed to nurturing meaningful partnerships and connections that contribute to an environment of prosperity and well-being for all generations to come.

This acknowledgement is made on the Treaty 20 land and the territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg and within the traditional lands of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaty First Nations. Further, our gratitude is extended to the nations of Alderville, Beausoleil, Curve Lake, Georgina Island, Hiawatha, Rama, and Scugog Island.

Our Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan reflects a shared responsibility: to protect and restore the health of our environment for future generations.



SUMMARY OF INITIATIVES

The initiatives set out in this plan include the following categories:

 SUSTAINABILITY	 MITIGATION (CORPORATE)	 MITIGATION (COMMUNITY)	 ADAPTATION
Land	Fleet	Home Retrofits	Climate Adaptation Planning
Water	Buildings	Transportation	
Agriculture	Waste Reduction	Green Development	
Sustainable Tourism	Procurement	Businesses	

Over the next five years the County will work toward achieving the initiatives set out in the plan update. Our work plan over the next five years supports:

- Reducing corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40-45% from 2018 levels to meet the Federal 2030 target¹
- Doing our part to reduce community GHG emissions
- Improved sustainability and resilience across the County
- A completed Climate Adaptation Plan

¹ Environment and Climate Change Canada, *2030 Emissions Reduction Plan*.



Image courtesy of GreenUP



LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

The causes and solutions to the global problem of climate change start locally. Canadian municipalities are answering the call to help mitigate our GHG emissions and adapt our communities to a changing climate.

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“Human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming.”²

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² Calvin et al., *IPCC Climate Change 2023 – Synthesis Report*.



MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Complementary strategies are required to respond to climate change and build resilience. **Mitigation** actions aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which will slow the amount of warming the earth will experience. **Adaptation** includes actions that support the community experience of climate change impacts in the present and future. Both strategies work together to protect people from the harm of a changing climate.

NATIONAL MITIGATION TARGETS

Canada's Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, is the national commitment to achieving emission-reduction of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, of 45 to 50% below 2005 levels by 2035³, and net-zero emissions by 2050. Future milestone targets must be informed by the best available science⁴.

THE UNITED NATION'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by Canada and other UN member States in 2015, is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. It includes 17 SDGs to stimulate global action. Many of the decisions made daily at the municipal level can have an impact on global progress towards the SDGs.

Without commitments at the local level and action from municipal governments and communities, progress on the SDGs is not possible. The SDGs provide a useful framework for the development of local policies, programs and initiatives that support sustainable development.

³ Environment and Climate Change Canada, "National Inventory Report 1990–2023: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada."

⁴ Environment and Climate Change Canada, *Climate Science 2050*.



SUSTAINABILITY

The County will prioritize the protection and enhancement of our natural assets such as our forests, wetlands, lakes, and rivers, ensuring they remain resilient in the face of climate change and development pressures.

LAND	WATER	AGRICULTURE	TOURISM
Ecosystem Naturalization Supporting biodiversity.	Watershed Planning Safeguarding the quality and quantity of our watershed.	Local Partnerships Supporting programs and funding.	The O'de Piitaanemaan Pledge Inviting respect of the land, water, and communities.
Invasive Species Management Invasive species awareness and removal best practices.	Conservation Partnering with the Conservation Authority and stewardship groups.	Sustainable Farming Encouraging best practices and on-farm activities.	First Nations and Locally-Led Tourism experiences that share knowledge and values.
Peterborough County Forest Realize planting opportunities and carbon offsetting.	Shoreline Protection Implement a grant or incentive program.		Green Step Certified Sustainable Tourism Destination.
SDG 15. Life on Land , by taking action to reduce degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity, and reducing invasive species.	SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation , by making efforts to improve water quality and protect water resources and water-related ecosystems.	SDG 2. Zero Hunger , which identifies the importance of achieving food security, and promoting sustainable agriculture.	SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth , by implementing practices to promote sustainable tourism that create jobs and promote local culture and products.

MITIGATION (CORPORATE)

Peterborough County's GHG emissions inventories track the progress toward Council-approved GHG reduction targets. The inventory includes direct and indirect emissions and follows internationally accepted accounting principles to ensure consistent and transparent reporting.

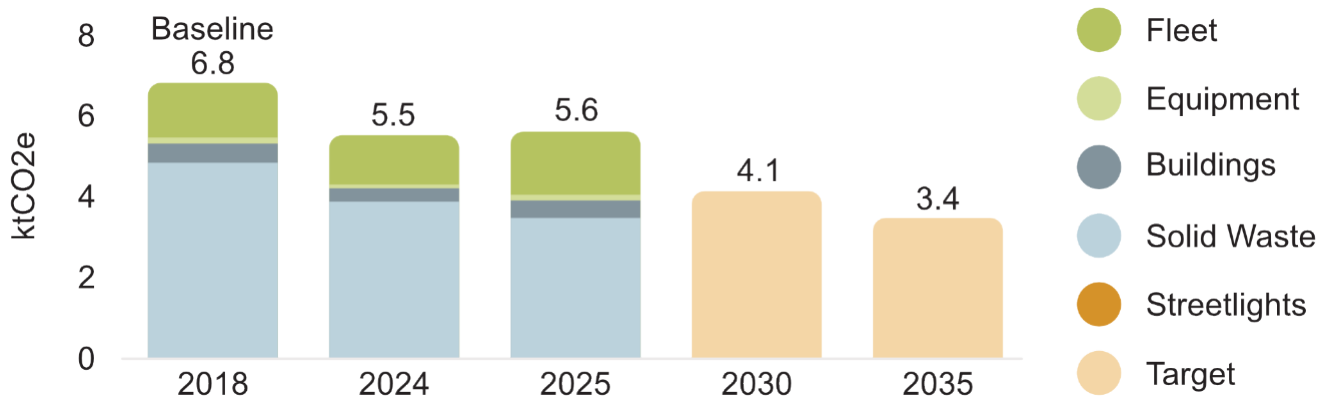


Figure 1: Peterborough County's corporate GHG emissions for 2024 and 2025, including the 2018 baseline and future targets.

Fleet: Includes vehicles for all County divisions, and the County share of Peterborough County/City Paramedics (PCCP) vehicles.

Equipment: Includes County owned and operated heavy equipment.

Buildings: Includes County buildings, and the County share of Peterborough County/City Paramedics buildings.

Solid Waste: Includes the County share of garbage landfilled at the Peterborough County/City Waste Management Facility.

Streetlights: Includes County streetlights, traffic lights, security lights.

CORPORATE MITIGATION ACTIONS

Read the complete Climate Change Action Plan Update to learn more about these actions.
www.ptbocounty.ca/sustainabilityplan

FLEET	BUILDINGS	WASTE	PROCUREMENT
Right sizing vehicles	Energy conservation & demand management	Diversion of organic waste	Social & sustainable procurement
Idling policy & driver training	Renewable/low carbon energy sources	Food waste awareness and reduction	Environmental considerations in purchasing
Fuel switching	Energy efficiency	Sustainable events	

SDG 13. Climate Action, and **SDG 12.** Responsible Consumption and Production. Working to reduce our corporate emissions, promoting sustainable procurement practices, and reducing our own waste supports these goals.





MITIGATION (COMMUNITY)

The most up to date GHG inventory with the County's Community emissions is from Sustainable Peterborough's 2011 baseline data⁵. The inventory shows that the greatest sources of emissions in the County are from transportation, residential buildings, and agriculture and forestry and other land uses (AFOLU). County staff will be working to update this Community GHG inventory in 2026 through our five-year action plan to identify progress up to now and moving forward.

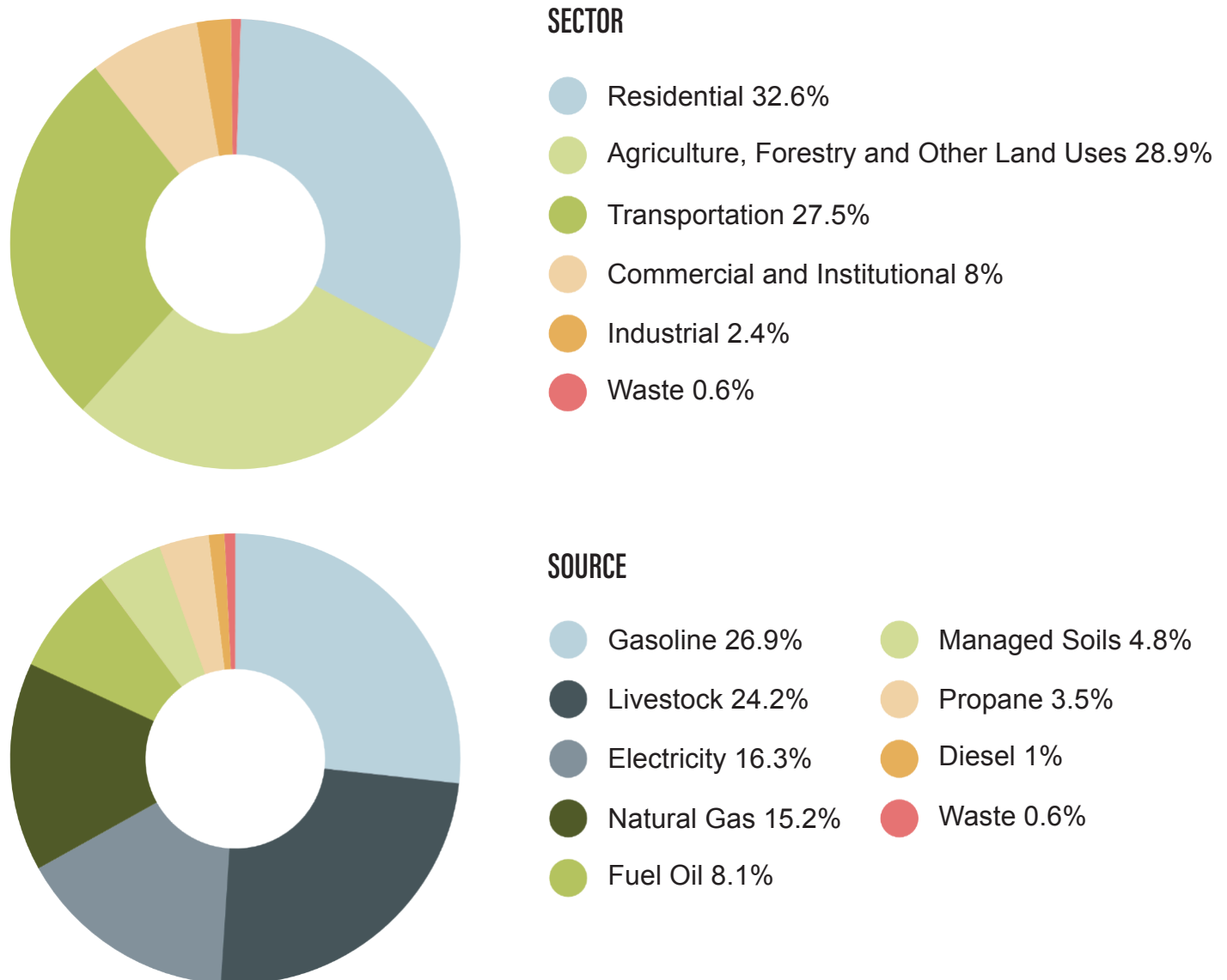


Figure 2: Peterborough County Community GHG emissions, 2011 by Sector (Top) and Source (Bottom).

⁵ Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation et al., "Greater Peterborough Area Community Sustainability Plan."



COMMUNITY MITIGATION ACTIONS

Read the complete Climate Change Action Plan Update to learn more about these actions.
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HOME RETROFITS	TRANSPORTATION	GREEN DEVELOPMENT	SUPPORTING BUSINESSES
Home retrofit incentives	Fuel switching	Green development score card	Invest in Green Economy Peterborough
Home retrofit loan programs	EV infrastructure	Green development incentives	Climate mitigation and adaptation toolkit
Fuel switching/energy efficiency	Active & public transportation		

SDG 13. Climate Action, and SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities. These actions support these goals by working toward lowering community emissions and improving sustainable transportation.



ADAPTATION

Peterborough County should prioritize climate adaptation planning to safeguard our communities, infrastructure, and natural assets from the increasing impacts of climate change. With rising temperatures, more frequent extreme weather events, and heightened flood risks, especially in low lying and rural areas, the County faces growing challenges to public safety, infrastructure resilience, and service delivery.

Adaptation planning will enable the County to:

- assess vulnerabilities;
- protect critical infrastructure like roads and bridges; and
- ensure that emergency services and rural communities remain accessible and supported.

By acting now, Peterborough County can:

- build resilience;
- reduce long-term costs; and
- lead by example in preparing for a changing climate.

Lakelands Public Health (formerly Peterborough Public Health) published a 2023 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment⁶. This report noted that next steps were to work collaboratively with partners to develop a community adaptation plan. The County can build off this work for our Climate Adaptation Plan.

INITIAL ADAPTATION ACTIONS

Complete a community wide, all hazard climate risk assessment and adaptation plan.

*The Adaptation Actions support **SDG 13. Climate Action**, by strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters.*

⁶ Leahy et al., "Climate-Change-Vulnerability-Assessment-Technical-Report-2023."



PLAN ENGAGEMENT

TOWNSHIP & FIRST NATIONS SURVEY

How we engaged: In July 2025, Peterborough County distributed a survey to member Townships and First Nations.

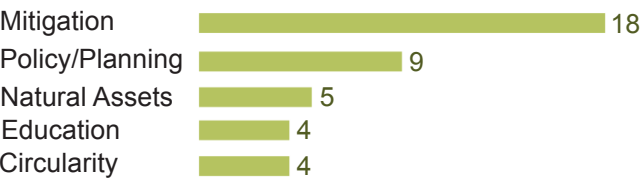
How the County can provide support:



STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

How we engaged: In June 2025, Peterborough County distributed a survey to Stakeholders. Among other questions, Stakeholders were asked,

“What initiatives or projects would you like the County to take on in the future?”



Stakeholders support mitigation initiatives, including through home and building retrofits and EV infrastructure.

RESIDENT SURVEY

How we engaged: Aug 5 to Sept 8, 2025, Peterborough County distributed a survey to Residents via engage.ptbocounty.ca.



Nearly **9 in 10 residents** (89%) surveyed have noticed changes in the local climate in the past decade.

Top Ranked potential climate initiatives:

- 1. **Incentives or financing** to help homeowners reduce heating and energy costs through home upgrades.
- 2. **Land stewardship programs** including tree planting, wetland/forest conservation, and shoreline protection.

DIVISION MEETINGS

How we engaged: May 2025 through July 2025, meetings were held with Peterborough County staff.

Desire to focus on key initiatives: Staff identified a strong interest in concentrating efforts on priority projects to drive meaningful impact.

Among divisions there were many initiatives identified that were already in place and working well. The meetings established that foundational work is currently in place and that aligning the plan with actionable goals will support further progress.



5-YEAR ACTION PLAN (2026-2030)

Over the next five years the County will work toward achieving the initiatives set out in this plan update. Our work over the next five years will support:

Reducing Our Corporate GHGs by 40-45% From 2018 Levels.

Council investment in the proposed initiatives will support this achievement. Mitigation efforts include waste diversion, energy efficiency in buildings, and fleet initiatives.

Doing Our Part to Reduce Community GHGs

Our goal through this five-year action plan is to set a standard for leadership and develop a reputation for the County as a positive role model for change.

Improved Sustainability and Resilience Across the County

The initiatives, encompassing land conservation, water resource management, agricultural innovation, and tourism development, support a resilient and thriving County.

A Completed Climate Adaptation Plan

Preparing for the impacts of climate change rather than reacting to crises as they occur. The plan will identify vulnerabilities and outline strategies to reduce risks. A completed plan will help secure funding and partnerships for future climate related projects.

Read the complete Climate Change Action Plan Update to learn more about these actions.

www.ptbocounty.ca/sustainabilityplan

ENSURING SUCCESS

Through a review of climate action implementation in Ontario⁷, key drivers for climate action implementation success in Ontario municipalities have been identified that will be utilized in safeguarding the success of our Action Plan⁸:

LEVERAGE FUNDING	COMMUNITY PARTNERS	STAFF CAPACITY	STRATEGIC PRIORITY
Enabling initiatives through access to external funding	Stakeholder aligned efforts and co-created solutions	Re-allocating resources to initiative coordination	Initiatives embedded in strategic plan and throughout organization

⁷ Climate Action Partnership, “Climate Action Partnership – Fostering Sustainable Cities.”

⁸ Kukadia, “Drivers and Barriers to Climate Action Implementation in Ontario.”





PETERBOROUGH COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN: 2026-2050

This summary is adapted from the complete Peterborough County Sustainability and Climate Change Action Plan: 2026-2050. The full report includes background, greenhouse gas inventory information, engagement findings, initiative descriptions, implementation considerations, and supporting references.



For complete citations and further detail, please refer to the full report.
www.ptbocounty.ca/sustainabilityplan

