Let’s Go Green Together 2014
Oakville’s Environmental Strategic Plan Progress Report
INTRODUCTION - OAKVILLE’S ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIC PLAN

On December 5, 2005, Council endorsed the town’s first Environmental Strategic Plan (ESP). At this time, north Oakville was still being planned, sustainability was a relatively new concept and the town had little in the way of a coordinated environmental outlook. Since then, much has changed. 2011 marked the first update of the ESP which reflects the transformation that has occurred since 2005.

On December 19, 2011, Council approved the updated ESP. This update was developed through consultation with the community and staff and features many new actions and goals that reflect both the successes we’ve had and the new challenges that lie ahead such as a greater focus on biodiversity, climate change and local food.

At the time of the update in December 2011, 99 per cent of the actions outlined in the 2005 ESP were either completed or underway. Some major achievements include the development of a State of the Environment Reporting program; Towards Zero Waste, Sustainable Building, Sustainable Green Fleet and Sustainable Purchasing procedures; the Oakville Wildlife Strategy; a Corporate Energy Management Plan and many others.

This brochure highlights many of these activities and provides an overview of some of the great initiatives underway in 2013. In implementing the ESP, partnerships and collaboration play a key role. The vast majority of work completed in 2013 involved the work of several departments working together. Community partners are also integral to the successful implementation of the ESP. In 2013, there were a total of 85 actions where progress was made. Of those, 36 involved collaboration with outside agencies, other levels of government and non-profit organizations. This represents almost half of the actions undertaken. Furthermore, while the annual reporting process focuses primarily on initiatives that are carried out by the town, community groups and agencies carry out many projects independently and play a significant part in the success of the plan.

The town monitors the implementation of the ESP and this progress is provided annually to Council. A detailed report outlines an extensive list of the actions completed and is available online at the town’s website at www.oakville.ca

If you are interested in providing your thoughts or comments, we’d love to hear from you. Feel free to contact us at environment@oakville.ca or call us at (905) 845-6601.
The updated 2011 ESP outlines six goals, each having objectives and actions to implement them. These were developed based on the existing framework and consultation with the community and staff. The following table outlines the Goals and Objectives of the plan.

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GOAL 1 | TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Town of Oakville is fortunate to have a wealth of natural areas within its borders and is committed to protecting and enhancing them. The update to the Environmental Strategic Plan recommends a number of actions for supporting our natural heritage such as the development of an invasive species strategy, support for the Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan, improvements to our waterways, the development of strategies to deal with climate change and restoration and expansion of naturalized areas.

Outreach and Education

Did you know that Oakville has almost 6,000 acres of greenspace within its borders? Or provincially significant wetlands that support many types of frogs, turtles and songbirds? Or on a walk through the forest you might encounter a fox, a coyote or some rare plants such as wild ginger or jack-in-the-pulpits in early spring. If you’re a homeowner, maybe you’re looking for a way to deal more effectively with the rabbits in your garden. The town offers a number of resources and takes part in many events to help the community learn about the local environment and understand how to live in harmony with the rich variety of species we share the land with.

In 2013, as part of the ongoing “living with wildlife” program the town introduced several new fact sheets such as wildlife proofing your home and hosted a well attended session on “managing your wild neighbours” which was videotaped and made available on our website. The implementation of the coyote education program also continued in partnership with OakvilleGreen with over 100 reports of coyote sightings made through the reporting system and over 15,000 children provided with coyote training at their schools. Staff hosted or participated in over 20 events as well to provide residents the opportunity to learn about the many environmental features and benefits the town has to offer and how they can get involved. To learn more about the town’s environmental education resources, visit www.oakville.ca/environment

Clean Water

Oakville is known for its location on the western shores of Lake Ontario and its many creeks that wind through the town. Protecting our water resources is a full time job and in 2013, the town was presented with the Safeguarding the Environment award by The Canadian Safe Boating Council (CSBC), in part for the extensive work carried out through Ontario Boating’s Clean Marine program that recently saw the installation of recycling facilities and a hazardous waste collection station and the removal of 530 liters of anti-freeze and 200 L of waste oil annually.

Stormwater programs ensure that property is protected from flooding and water entering the lake and creeks is filtered prior to entry. In 2013, three stormwater ponds were cleaned out which involves draining the ponds and then removing and disposing of the accumulated sediment. A Sediment Management Study was initiated and a stakeholder group established. The study seeks to investigate the main sources of sediment within the Oakville and Bronte Creeks and will be completed in 2014.
GOAL 2 | TO REDUCE OUR RESOURCE CONSUMPTION AND WASTE PRODUCTION

Our society depends on the maintenance and protection of ecosystems. Yet resources in many ecosystems are often over-exploited or managed in non-sustainable ways. Canada has one of the highest ecological footprints in the world which means that we have one of the highest rates of resource use - this includes things such as energy, water and food. By working together as a community, we can make a difference by collectively making better decisions on how we choose to use our resources.

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles (EV) are one way we can help reduce the impact of cars on both the environment and our pocketbooks. Hybrid vehicles can reduce fuel costs by 20-40% compared to conventional vehicles and for electric vehicles that can be recharged from the electricity grid, the potential energy cost savings are even greater.

In 2011, the town joined the EV 300 program to assist with integrating electric vehicles into the fleet. An EV feasibility study for the town fleet was completed and in 2013, the first two electric vehicles and one charging station were purchased. These are being used by our Fire Safety department and were highlighted at the town’s annual energy fair in 2014.

Reducing Energy Use

As a member of the Partners for Climate Protection program, the town is committed to reducing its energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and a comprehensive Conservation and Demand Management Plan is being developed in 2014, building on the 2009 plan.

In 2013 a number of projects were completed for town facilities, such as:

- To reduce energy consumption, new boilers were installed at Town Hall with a 96 per cent efficiency rating to replace the five existing boilers.
- A new low-e ceiling was installed and insulation replaced in the Green Rink at Glen Abbey Community Centre. The low emissivity ceiling reduces the energy required and improves lighting levels that enhance the rink’s appearance.
- Energy audits were initiated for key town facilities in 2013 and these are being continued into 2014.
- Improvements to energy efficiency were also made for the town’s lighting. Council received the 2013 Streetlight Capital Program, outlining the proposed work for annual Street Light Rehabilitation and a new LED Conversion program. Staff have been meeting with suppliers of LED equipment, Oakville Hydro and developer’s consultants on LED streetlight implementation in new subdivisions. LED streetlights will soon be placed at the Mattamy Lower Fourth/Pendent development in north Oakville and the CLC/DND lands at Rebecca and Dorval.

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GOAL 3 | TO ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Transportation choices depend on commuting distance, accessibility of alternative transportation modes such as bicycle lanes and the availability of options supported by Transportation Demand Management (TDM), transit and safe routes. The town’s newly approved transportation master plan, Switching Gears, and the Active Transportation Master Plan help guide transportation planning in the town.

Active Transportation Master Plan

On October 5, 2009, Council adopted the Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP). The ATMP as a strategy is more than a proposed network of on and off-road pedestrian and cycling facilities; it includes recommendations to promote and accommodate safe walking and cycling, and to recognize and share in the economic, health and quality of life benefits that these forms of transportation offer.

In 2013, the town completed numerous outreach initiatives in support of the Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP):

A total of over 16 km of new active transportation facilities were delivered throughout the town.

38 ring and post bike racks were installed in the downtown Oakville Commercial District area along Lakeshore Road.

The Cycle, Walk Oakville map was updated and multiple improvements were made to the on-line interactive mapping tool.

Staff participated and encouraged cycling throughout the Clean Air Commute in June 2013.

Staff initiated a Carpool Zone survey for employee feedback in August 2013.

Oakville Transit

Transit use increased once again in 2013 as measured by passenger trips per capita. Oakville Transit continuously works with other agencies and businesses to improve service and make transit more accessible. In 2013, some of the initiatives included:

Implementation of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) to provide real-time tracking. Customers can confirm their next bus arrival time online or through their smartphone.

Two new routes were launched: Route 120 East Industrial and Route 5A to the new residential area at Neyagawa north of Dundas.

The Halton Region transit subsidy program (SPLIT) was launched as a program subsequent to its very successful pilot in 2012.

The town launched its Free Transit for Seniors Monday program which significantly increased weekday transit use.
GOAL 4 | TO CREATE AND SUPPORT A HEALTHY, RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Building the health and resiliency of our community ensures that we can adapt and thrive in an increasingly complex world. A healthy community means we have clean water and greenspaces, that we have the opportunity to take part in outdoor activities and enjoy the natural resources that surround us. It means we build in a way that minimizes impacts to our environment and that we have the opportunity to live, work and play in our own town. The town has made significant strides over the past few years in building our capacity to uphold our ability to be healthy and resilient.

Oakville Parks

Oakville residents consistently rate our parks as the top cherished amenity with good reason. The town offers 1,420 hectares of parkland, over 300 kilometres of trails, and more than 200 parks, garden plots, off-leash dog parks, playgrounds, skateboard parks, splash pads, sports fields, tennis courts, two harbours and 31 waterfront parks. In 2013, 1.5 acres of parkland were added and 1,500 meters of trail were constructed or improved.

The North Oakville Trails Plan, a unique trail system designed specifically for the New Communities of Oakville, located north of Dundas Street was updated and approved by Council. In the south end of town, South Shell Park continues to be a key restoration site with further stewardship work by Appleby College, Evergreen and TD Bank. Last year, invasive species were removed, infill planting and mulching were undertaken (approximately 700 trees and shrubs) and habitat structures were added to further enhance biodiversity. This is a critical area for migratory birds travelling across Lake Ontario and educational signage explaining this was also installed.

Safer Roads

Did you know there are over 800 kilometers of roads in Oakville that are used by cars, trucks, motorcycles, pedestrians, cyclists and even animals. Improving community safety helps make a more livable town and in 2013, a number of projects were taken on to support safer roads.

A Road Ecology Strategy was initiated in partnership with Halton Region and Conservation Halton. Road ecology provides options for minimizing the impacts on wildlife and the environment. The strategy is expected to be completed in 2014.

Physical traffic calming measures such as medians and/or speed cushions were installed by many local schools including Forest Trail, St. Mary’s and Joshua Creek Eastview.

In 2006, Council approved a staff report recommending that existing Pedestrian Crossover Control (PXO) devices be converted to Pedestrian Signal Control devices (PS) or full traffic signals through a multi-year conversion program. Where warranted, PS devices are preferred over PXO devices as they display a red light to vehicles when activated, ensuring a much higher level of vehicle compliance opposed to the flashing amber signal provided by the PXO. As of 2013, nine of the 15 original locations with PXO control have been converted to PS or full traffic signal control.
GOAL 5 | TO FOSTER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP THROUGH EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Education and outreach programs are key components to increase our community’s awareness of environmental issues. The Town is continuously fostering environmental stewardship through education and community involvement.

The Oakville Environmental Fund

The Oakville Environmental Fund (OEF) was established with the Oakville Community Foundation as a condition in the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 198 Minutes of Settlement. Funds are used to acquire environmentally significant lands and support environmental initiatives and activities throughout the town. Since its inception in 2005, the OEF has distributed $67,795 (2006 - 2012).

In 2013, funding was approved for various community outreach initiatives including the Earth Rangers Foundation “Bring Back the Wild”, Evergreen’s annual tree plantings and Oakville Cycle’s public awareness campaign.

Volunteer Plantings

Oakville is a great community with residents who are passionate about their environment. While the town facilitates a number of tree planting and restoration projects, community partners such as OakvilleGreen, Conservation Halton, Evergreen, the Oakville Horticulture Society and the Oakville Sustainable Food Partnership work with us to engage and support residents in helping make a difference. In 2013, we worked with our community on a number of great projects:

Forestry staff participated in National Tree Day on September 25. They planted the first 300 trees at Oakville Park before being joined by community volunteers who planted 450 more.

Iroquois Ridge High School students helped plant 1,300 trees and shrubs at Winston Woods Park; Suncor staff planted trees at Woodgate Woods; Rotary Club of Oakville planted at Cornwall Sports Park; CheerForce cheerleading team planted at Bloomfield Park; and BMO planted at Shell Park.
In striving to be the most livable town in Canada, the town incorporates best management practices and innovative thinking into its programs and policies. This couldn’t be done without strong partnerships with the community and other partners.

Leading through innovation

The town has an ongoing commitment to be a leader on environmental issues and marked this through a number of awards, “firsts” and sharing of technical expertise with other agencies and levels of government in 2013.

• The town worked collaboratively with project partners Evergreen, Conservation Halton and the Bronte Business Improvement Area to apply for funding through the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund for the restoration of the Bronte Bluffs. Announcements were made by the province at the end of 2013 that the town’s submission was successful and work is being carried out in 2014 which will see a number of improvements to habitat and water quality.

• In 2006, the Town of Oakville was the first lower-tier municipality in Canada to have three of its woodlands achieve Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) certification through the certification program of the Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF). In 2013, the town announced the FSC certification had been expanded to include all 282 of its woodland properties.

• The Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA) presented John McNeil, manager of Forestry Services with the John H. Sellers Award for his work in managing Oakville’s Emerald Ash Borer epidemic, and his contribution to the promotion and awareness of professional forestry in Ontario.

• A technical paper co-authored by staff and the town’s subject matter expert, Dr. Franco DiGiovanni titled *A Canadian Municipal Regulatory Permitting System for PM$_{2.5}$ Emissions and Health Impacts Utilizing the CALPUFF Dispersion Model* was selected for presentation at the Air and Waste Management Association’s Specialty Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina from March 19 to 21. Dr. DiGiovanni presented the paper.

• Environmental Policy staff participated on the province’s Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System (EDDMaps) steering committee. EDDMaps is a web-based mapping system for documenting invasive species distribution and was developed to assist in better managing the spread of invasive species. The online system allows for input from both stakeholder (e.g. provincial, municipal) data sets and public input. The system can be used to monitor the spread of species, pinpoint pathways of spread and assess efficacy of treatment programs.
What you can do

- Volunteer with a local environmental organization, club or agency.
- Plant a native tree. Many local nurseries can recommend a species suited to your needs and Oakvillegreen offers information and programs to help you get started as well. Visit www.oakvillegreen.org for details.

Contact us

The town’s Environmental Policy department offers a number of resources. For further information on Oakville’s environment, please contact us at:

Town of Oakville Environmental Policy
1225 Trafalgar Road
Oakville, ON L6H 0H3
Phone: 905-845-6601
Email: environment@oakville.ca
Website: www.oakville.ca/environment

Resources

- For a list of where to take back a wide range of items for recycling, including batteries, paint and furniture, go to www.halton.ca/takeitback
- Get involved in local environmental events. Halton Environmental Network (HEN) provides a calendar for many community activities. Visit http://haltonenvironment.com

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