

REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Jennifer Spence, Sustainability Engagement Coordinator

DATE: November 14, 2018

REPORT NO.: PLS-2018-0081

RE: Staff Sustainability Team 2018 Accomplishments and 2019 Priorities

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PLS-2018-0081 dated November 12, 2018 regarding the Staff Sustainability Team 2018 Accomplishments and 2019 Priorities be received for information.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning, Public Works & Transportation Committee an update of the Staff Sustainability Team 2018 accomplishments and their priorities for 2019.

The Committee is comprised of dedicated staff from across the corporation who bring their interest, strength and experience to this committee to make the Committee an effective tool for enhancing sustainability in the corporation and educating staff on sustainability.

Sustainability is a key Council priority. It is identified as such in the Town's Strategic Action Plan. The Staff Sustainability Team is guided by the following statement in terms of what it aims to accomplish:

"Through collaboration, engagement, leadership and the leveraging of existing initiatives, the Staff Sustainability Team is committed to delivering on Council's and staff priorities. We will accomplish this by coordinating and taking strategic value-added actions that demonstrate corporate sustainability leadership, support continuous improvement, avoid and mitigate risks, and improve our quality of life through a focus on our economic, cultural, environmental and social well-being".

The Staff Sustainability Team contributes to the Corporation by:

- Delivering on Strategic Plan priorities.
- Creating an innovative, vibrant and great workplace.
- Supporting employee satisfaction and engagement.
- Achieving efficiencies in energy, water and waste diversion.
- Avoiding risks (e.g. energy costs, legislation and climate change).
- Supporting corporate leadership and reputation.
- Supporting effective governance and decision-making.
- Contributing to creating a complete, efficient and vibrant community.
- Encouraging lasting behaviour change.
- Fostering partnerships with other Town committees.

Overall, the work of the Staff Sustainability Team contributes to supporting a great workplace while implementing Council's priorities as stated in Council's Strategic Action Plan.

COMMENTS:

The Staff Sustainability Team has accomplished many initiatives during 2018 that has contributed to the success of the Committee over the past nine years. Some projects are a continuance from one year to the next and some are one day events. Examples of the Team's various initiatives that have been implemented since 2009 include:

- Two successful vegetable gardens
- Developed the Green Development Standards for new construction to improve water and energy conservation
- Improved waste diversion at Town facilities
- Organized educational workshops and Lunch and Learns for Town staff
- Organized an annual week of events and activities highlighting the four pillars of sustainability
- Acted as a stakeholder group for draft plans, policies and strategies
- Completed short and long-term projects to leverage sustainability throughout the corporation.

1.0 2018 Accomplishments

In 2018, the Staff Sustainability Team accomplished a variety of initiatives that have enhanced the corporation and the engagement of staff. Below are key 2018 accomplishments listed alphabetically:

1.1 Bike Share Program:

The Bike Share program continued to be available at Town Hall during the summer of 2018 as part of the Town's award-winning Smart Commute program. For the sixth

summer, bicycles have been available to borrow for work-related trips and/or for personal recreation during lunch hour. A new fold-up bicycle was added to the Bike Share program fleet in the spring of 2018. This bicycle did not increase the number of times bicycles were borrowed however many staff were interested in it and test drove the bicycle on Town property. The other bicycles in the fleet are better suited for long bike rides on the trails and streets.

The Bike Share program has 21 participants and three bicycles. Participants have to sign a waiver and complete a multiple choice bicycle riding test before they borrow a bicycle. The Program encourages employees to try an alternate low carbon mode of transportation which supports active healthy living.

1.3 Earth Week Celebrations (22- Minute Makeover):

Earth Day has been celebrated globally since 1970. The Town of Halton Hills celebrates Earth Day by hosting its annual 'Earth Week Celebrations'. One of the activities during Earth Week Celebrations is the 22-Minute Makeover. The Staff Sustainability Team planned, promoted and participated in the 22-Minute Makeover. In 2018, approximately 100 Town employees participated in this event on Monday April 23rd for 22 minutes and picked up waste along streets, town trails and forested areas in the community. The Staff Sustainability Team hosted the annual 22 - Minute Makeover Thank You Event after the clean-up was completed. Participants celebrated by eating ice cream and they were given a complimentary package of wildflower seeds (to grow to feed the bees). There were draws of spring flower arrangements to thank staff for their participation in this successful event.

1.4 Halton Fresh Food Box Program:

Town employees have participated in the Halton Fresh Food Box program for eight years. This program has provided Town staff with the option to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables from our local growers and continues to promote healthy food choices. As of October, approximately 1,060 kilograms (2,336 pounds) of produce were purchased by Town staff in 2018.

Over the past eight years approximately 16,691 kilograms (27,979 pounds) of produce have been purchased by Town staff. Several Town employees have also regularly donated Halton Fresh Food boxes to the Georgetown Bread Basket and the Acton Foodshare program throughout the year.

1.5 Lunch and Learn Sessions:

The Staff Sustainability Team provided educational opportunities for Town staff on sustainability initiatives by hosting three Lunch and Learn Sessions in 2018. These sessions supported sustainability, continuous education and an improved workplace that resulted in more engaged staff.

The first Lunch and Learn of 2018 focused on pollination and consisted of two parts over lunch hour on separate days. The “More Than Honey” documentary was shown. The documentary highlighted the role bees play in pollinating vegetation and crops for human consumption. The movie portrayed how a severe drop in bee population will have a catastrophic effect on world food supply and ecosystems. Additional information and resources on bees and their roles on the food chain were available at this Lunch and Learn session. Examples include: packages of wildflowers were handed out for participants to plant, honey sticks were available to take and Town staff created a pamphlet with links to Halton Hills Public Library videos, books and other websites with more information about bees. A wild bee house was drawn at the end of the second part of the Lunch and Learn as a door prize.

The second Lunch and Learn topic was “Homesteading” which was held during the Sustainability BBQ at the Town Hall Demonstration Garden during Sustainability Week. Owners of Spring Chicken Family Health presented on the “Top Ten Ways to Foster Sustainability in Daily Life”:

- Build Community;
- Learn Your Medicines;
- Compost/Vermipost;
- Eat Your Weeds;
- Grow Your Own Food;
- Water Harvest;
- Pollinator Support;
- Cut Out Plastics; and
- Eat Local Year Round.

This fascinating lecture was presented at each lunch session for staff. Wildflower seeds were available to participants by the presenters.

The third session is at the end of November where Town staff will have the opportunity to make a ‘bee’ craft to remind them of the importance of bees to the food supply chain. This Lunch and Learn is in Acton and does not include lunch. However craft supplies to make a bee are covered by the Staff Sustainability Team budget.

1.6 Smart Commute Program:

For the first time since the Town of Halton Hills joined Smart Commute in 2010, the Town reached the Platinum Level Workplace Designation in 2018. Metrolinx and Smart Commute awarded the Town for its outstanding commitment to sustainable transportation options for commuters. Town employees participated in the Smart Commute Program throughout the year especially during their special events. Smart Commute staff supported the Noon Hour Bike Ride Town event on Bike to Work Day. Halton Smart Commute staff attended the event and brought free t-shirts and freezies for all participants.

The Staff Sustainability Team promoted and participated in the seventh annual “Noon Hour Bike Ride” that occurred on Bike to Work Day (Monday May 29th). Approximately 25 Town employees and members of the public participated in this event. Cyclists participated in a group ride along trails, quiet streets and stopped at the Georgetown Fairgrounds to eat their lunch and have a rest stop.

1.7 Sustainability Week:

Staff engagement and education are key objectives of the Staff Sustainability Team. The Team celebrated its third annual ‘Sustainability Week’ from June 11 to 15, 2018 with events and activities that focused on the four pillars of sustainability: cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health, and social wellbeing. To view the Sustainability Week poster please see Appendix 1 at the back of this report.

1.8 Town Hall Demonstration Garden:

The Town Hall Garden continued to generate conversations and collaboration amongst Town staff during 2018. Town employees have donated seeds, plants and their time to the Garden. The automated irrigation system was installed in 2017 and has allowed for efficient watering of the Garden in the morning when it is cooler outside and helps to prevent water evaporation.

An additional garden plot at the Devereaux House Garden was rented to grow food for local food banks. This plot has a full sun exposure and is excellent for growing vegetables such as zucchini and tomatoes.

Overall, both gardens grew a total of 20 kilograms of the following: lettuce, kale, herbs, beans, green peppers, potatoes, squash, melon, tomatoes and zucchini. Vegetables were delivered weekly from July to the end of September to the Georgetown Bread Basket and Acton Foodshare.

On Thursday August 9, 2018, the New Tanner published an article written by Vivien Fleisher about the Demonstration Garden and the good work of the Staff Sustainability Team who maintain it. The article is attached as Appendix 2 at the back of this report.

1.9 Waste Diversion

In 2013, the Staff Sustainability Team implemented a ‘Moving Towards Zero Waste’ initiative at the Town Hall. Employees were educated on the benefits of a centralized waste system. Waste diversion was improved by placing centralized waste receptacles (green cart, recycling and a regular waste receptacle) in each department. Regular waste receptacles from individual work stations and offices were removed. A waste audit was conducted shortly after the initiative began to determine if staff participated, understood the benefits and diverted waste properly. Collectively, staff confirmed their

understanding of the initiative, and improved their waste diversion by reducing regular waste to one bag every three days from three bags of waste per day.

In 2015, the Green Cart program was implemented at the Halton Hills Public Library locations in Acton and Georgetown in the 'staff only' areas.

In 2018, the Staff Sustainability Team focused on improving waste diversion at the new Robert C. Austin Operation's Centre (Op's Centre). Waste management practices in the Op's Centre were reviewed and the Staff Sustainability Team provided recommendations to improve it. Those recommendations were included in a waste diversion workplan and a communication plan was developed with the support of Corporate Communications to guide the implementation of the enhanced waste diversion pilot program at the Op's Centre in November 2018.

2019 Priorities:

The Staff Sustainability Team held a meeting in November 2018 to explore priorities for 2019. Four questions guided the process:

- What are the key desired outcomes?
- What do we want to achieve in 2019?
- What difference do we want to make in our workplace?
- What difference do we want to make in our community?

After considering a number of possible projects and recognizing the commitments from 2018, the Staff Sustainability Team plans to advance the following key projects in 2019 which are listed alphabetically below:

2.1 Bike Share Program:

In 2019, the Bike Share program will continue to be promoted to Town employees. A survey will be conducted to determine if another Town facility is interested in hosting the Bike Share program during the summer of 2019. The Program promotes active transportation, health and wellness, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and saves transportation costs.

2.2 Climate Change Adaptation Plan:

The development of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan is underway and being led by the Office of Sustainability. The Staff Sustainability Team will be a stakeholder group and will be involved when required.

2.3 Corporate Energy Plan:

The Corporate Energy Plan is also scheduled to be updated in 2019 and the SST will act as a key stakeholder group during the update.

In 2019, the SST will assist with the last implementation phase of the 2014 Corporate Energy Plan where required and will contribute to the development of the new corporate energy plan in 2019.

2.4 Earth Week Celebrations (22- Minute Makeover):

On Monday April 22nd 2019, The Staff Sustainability Team will once again host the celebration after the 22-Minute Makeover for Town employees to thank them for taking 22 minutes out of their day to help clean the community.

2.5 Green Development Leadership Awards:

Nominations for the Green Development Leadership Awards are typically accepted until the end of June. The submission date for 2019 is Monday June 24. The Awards recognizes the development industry leaders who are making a valuable contribution to the sustainability of Halton Hills. The Staff Sustainability Team will assist with the promotion of the Awards and the initial review of submissions received.

2.6 Halton Fresh Food Box:

The Halton Fresh Food Box program will continue to provide an opportunity for Town staff to access mostly locally grown fresh produce in 2019. This initiative supports local growers, healthy eating and overall wellbeing.

2.7 Lunch and Learn Education Sessions:

The Staff Sustainability Team will continue to bring valuable, informative and engaging Lunch and Learn education sessions for Town staff. Three sessions are being planned for 2019. The working group will be meeting shortly to discuss ideas.

2.8 Smart Commute Program:

Implementation of the Smart Commute Program is led by Smart Commute Halton. The Staff Sustainability Team assists with the promotion of Smart Commute events to encourage employees in all Town facilities to participate. There are typically three main events per year:

- Carpool Week (Feb);
- Bike to Work Day (May); and
- Smart Commute Week (September).

We plan to host our eighth annual “Noon Hour Bike Ride” on the globally recognized “Bike to Work Day” on May 27, 2019. This event is open to Town staff and the public to enjoy a bike ride along Town trails and quiet streets that lead to the Georgetown Fairgrounds. This event promotes social wellbeing, cultural vibrancy and discovery of the trail system through the historical area of downtown Georgetown.

2.9 Sustainability Week:

Building on the successful 2018 Sustainability Week, the 2019 Sustainability Week will be fun, educational and interactive. Planning of activities will begin in 2019. One of the events will include the annual Sustainability BBQ and Fair. Additional sustainability events will be planned for Sustainability Week in June.

2.10 Town Hall Demonstration Garden:

The Town Hall Demonstration Garden is in its eighth year of existence at Town Hall and the additional garden plot at the Devereaux House is in its fifth year. The Garden continues to create gardening conversations and camaraderie amongst staff while contributing to fresh food available for those in need that use local food banks.

2.11 Waste Management:

In 2019, the Staff Sustainability Team will continue with employee engagement and education to minimize waste and increase waste diversion into the three streams of waste: recycling, organic and regular. The Staff Sustainability Team will continue focusing on improving waste diversion at the Robert C. Austin Operations Centre and plans to conduct a waste audit during Earth Week Celebrations in April 2019. Another focus will be minimizing waste at Town events to lessen our impact on the environment.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Sustainability is one of eight Council priorities identified in the Town’s Strategic Action Plan, and repeatedly referenced throughout the Strategic Plan’s strategic directions, strategic objectives and strategic actions. The work of the Staff Sustainability continues to leverage and advance these Council objectives.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

The 2018 Staff Sustainability Team accomplishments and 2019 priorities were determined in collaboration with the Staff Sustainability Team and other departments as needed.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The work of the Staff Sustainability Team will be promoted within the community where relevant.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The recommendation outlined in this report advances the Strategy's implementation.

This report supports all four pillars of sustainability: cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being. In summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is excellent.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The work of the Staff Sustainability Team will be promoted where relevant in the corporation.

CONCLUSION:

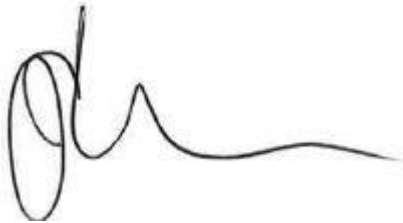
The Staff Sustainability Team has undertaken short and long-term projects to leverage sustainability throughout the corporation. Through dedicated members of the Staff Sustainability Team significant successful achievements has occurred in 2018.

In 2019, the Staff Sustainability Team's priorities will continue to further embed sustainability throughout the corporation and advance key projects that are aligned with the Strategic Plan and the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy through actions relating to the pillars of sustainability: cultural vibrancy, environmental health, economic prosperity and the social well-being.

Reviewed and Approved by,



Gabriel Clarke, Manager of Sustainability and Climate Change



John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability



Brent Marshall, CAO