



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee

From: Michael Papadacos, Director, Asset Management and Capital Planning

Meeting Date: April 17, 2024

Report: Peterborough Public Health Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report, Report PEAC24-006

Subject

A presentation from Peterborough Public Health to the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee regarding the completion of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report for the Peterborough Public Health Region.

Recommendation

That the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee approve the recommendation outlined in Report PEAC24-006, dated April 17, 2024, of the Director of Asset Management and Capital Planning, as follows:

That the presentation from Peterborough Public Health be received for information.

Background

In 2022, Peterborough Public Health (PPH) recommenced work initiated in 2019 to improve its understanding of the health impacts of local vulnerable groups to the effects of climate change. This coincided with a requirement by the Ontario Public Health Standards to identify local climate risks for vulnerable populations. PPH convened a multidisciplinary team of public health experts, such as nurses and health promoters. Subject matter experts from the following external organizations were asked to provide input to the PPH team to inform the [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report](#):

- City of Peterborough,
- County of Peterborough,
- Selwyn Township,
- Curve Lake First Nation,
- Hiawatha First Nation,
- Métis Nation of Ontario – Peterborough & District,
- Otonabee Region Conservation Authority,
- Sustainable Peterborough,
- Trent University,
- Fleming College,
- Sustainable Peterborough,
- Peterborough Regional Health Centre; and
- a youth representative.

The assessment evaluated the climate impacts within the PPH Region which includes the jurisdictional boundaries of the City, County, and both First Nation communities. The evaluation focused on the following six climate hazards that are projected to intensify and that will have the most significant impact on the PPH Region within the century:

- Extreme temperatures,
- Extreme weather events,
- Food and water security and safety,
- Vector-borne diseases,
- Air quality; and
- Ultraviolet radiation.

Climate data for the six hazards were captured from climatedata.ca as well as from local and provincial datasets.

The most at-risk community members in the PPH Region were identified as persons in vulnerable life stages, such as infants, youth, pregnant persons, and the elderly. Socioeconomic factors influencing how an individual can cope with climate hazards were also assessed. These social determinants of health expand the number of community members exposed to climate hazards and heighten the risks for individuals already in vulnerable life stages. The additional vulnerable groups assessed include the following:

- People experiencing socioeconomic disadvantages,
- Recent immigrants,
- Outdoor workers,
- People living with chronic health conditions,
- People with mental health conditions,
- People experiencing homelessness,
- People who use substances; and
- Indigenous people.

The assessment determined that community members in vulnerable life stages or groups are currently at risk and will be even greater if greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are not drawn down by 2050. However, near-term climate impacts will continue to be felt due to the high concentrations of GHG emissions already emitted into the atmosphere. Preventing vulnerable community members from experiencing adverse health impacts from near-term climate hazards is required. PPH currently provides various programs and support services to facilitate adaptation for vulnerable populations. However, further work is needed, such as creating an adaptation plan focused on priority populations to improve local health outcomes.

Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar: Community & Well-being

Strategic Initiative: Demonstrate strong leadership in environmental stewardship by proactively addressing issues and challenges of climate change and the environment.

In 2019, City Council approved the Climate Emergency Declaration that requires City staff to report to PEAC on climate action. The Declaration also requires that City staff “greatly accelerate timelines for our existing actions to reduce the effects of climate change; add new actions and proposals to reduce greatly our GHG emissions” by 45 percent in 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budgetary or financial implications associated with the recommendations.

Submitted by,

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