

Carbon Footprint Strategy for Huron County

April 2018

Carbon Footprint Strategy: goals for 2018

- Fleet: collect data and investigate feasibility of greening the County fleet
 - o Compile inventory of vehicles in fleet (highways, EMS, property services). Compile existing data on fuel use of County-owned vehicles and personal vehicles use for County business.
 - o Consult departments with County vehicles and determine best practices for collecting information about fuel use.
 - o Consult other municipalities with strategies to green their fleet.
 - o Research options for green infrastructure, such as charging stations, equipment to monitor vehicle use (idling, speeding, GPS, etc.).
 - o Consider allocation for greening fleet in 2019 budget.
 - o Possible option to create a green purchasing strategy for new vehicles.
- Continue to fund the Huron Clean Water Project (\$400K approved for 2018), and promote best practices for sustainable agriculture and land stewardship to private landowners.
- Meet the target in the CDM for reducing energy use in County buildings by 2.5% by the end of 2018, compared to 2013 usage.
- Look for opportunities for naturalization of County-owned properties.
- Investigate grant opportunities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to fund climate change staff.

Reducing energy use

Ontario Regulation 397/11 under the Green Energy Act 2009 requires public agencies—municipalities, municipal service boards, school boards, universities, colleges and hospitals—to develop and implement energy Conservation and Demand Management (CDM) plans, starting in 2014.

In response the County formed a Conservation Committee, which is a group of staff whose goal is to achieve the targets of the CDM. Using energy use in 2013 as a baseline, the County strives to reduce energy consumption in County-owned or -managed properties by 2.5% over 5 years (by December 2018). The committee aims to reduce energy use and to create a culture of conservation in our work places, which has many benefits including mitigating costs through wise energy use.

Currently, the County's fleet is not incorporated into the CDM. The County has implemented an anti-idling strategies for its highway and EMS fleets to reduce the fuel use and emissions from County vehicles.

Recent accomplishments

After three years, the County had reduced energy consumption by approximately 1.9%. Energy use had gone down in 75% of County buildings as a result of changes in workplace habits and several building renovations to improve energy efficiency. Projects included replacing old equipment with energy efficient versions such as boilers and rooftop mounted heating and cooling units, installing motion sensors and energy-efficient light bulbs, new windows, and completing energy audits on several buildings.

The price of energy is rising in Ontario. The County consumed 1.9% less energy in 2016 compared to 2013, but paid \$152,000 more in energy costs (\$988.6K versus \$836.5K). If the County had not implemented any energy-saving projects and used the same amount of energy as in 2013 but paid the price of energy in 2016, the cost would have been about \$120,000 higher: that is the cost of doing nothing. This shows that investment in energy-saving projects results in the County actually saving money. Good for the bottom line, and for the environment! These results were presented to County Council in August 2017.

Source	2013	2016
Electricity (kWh)	4,149,848	3,964,132
Natural Gas (m ³)	764,120	746,796
Propane (L)	31,383	50,736
Gasoline (L)	54,237	105,197
Diesel (L)	350,035	321,367

*Numbers are approximate and not corrected for weather

Compensation for Carbon Use

From 2005-17, the County of Huron has invested \$4.1M in private land stewardship projects that have a water quality benefit. The County compensates for its carbon footprint through the reforestation component of the Clean Water Project (CWP). There are additional carbon offsets, such as improved forest health as a result of the CWP incentive funding for forest management plans by professional foresters, or the cover crop incentive which builds soil organic matter.

Over 39,000 trees were planted through the Huron Clean Water Project in 2017.

In 2017, the County of Huron planted 250 trees and shrubs (30 different species) at its Huronview property outside of Clinton. That property has had extensive stewardship work, including tree planting in approximately 4.5 acres of marginal farm land, installation of berms and grassed water ways to control erosion, and a wetland complex. The County has a lease agreement with Huron Perth Soil and Crop to demonstrate innovative techniques for cover cropping and sustainable farming (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uThTap-bK2Y>).