

Subject: Response to Audit of Climate Change Master Plan Report

File Number: ACS 2025-SI-CCR-0007

Report to Environment and Climate Change Committee on 16 September 2025

and Council 24 September 2025

Submitted on September 5, 2025 by Debbie Stewart, General Manager, Strategic Initiatives Department

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Ward: Citywide

Objet: Réaction au Rapport sur la Vérification du Plan directeur sur les changements climatiques

Numéro de dossier : ACS 2025-SI-CCR-0007

Rapport présenté au Comité de l'environnement du changement climatique le 16 septembre 2025

et au Conseil le 24 septembre 2025

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Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Environment and Climate Change Committee recommend Council approve the Climate Change Master Plan prioritization framework, including the definition of the City's role in climate change community action, as outlined in this report.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité de l'environnement et du changement climatique recommande au Conseil municipal d'approuver la structure-cadre de priorisation du Plan directeur sur les changements climatiques, dont la définition du rôle de la Ville dans l'intervention communautaire de lutte contre les dérèglements du climat, selon les modalités exposées dans ce rapport.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to two of the seven the recommendations of the [Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan \(CCMP\)](#), related to clarifying the role of the City in advancing community action and prioritization of a realistic set of key projects and activities under the CCMP. This report also responds to [Motion No. 2023-28-17](#) that provides direction on prioritization, capital funding allocation and a focus on areas of municipal authority.

The City of Ottawa continues to make meaningful progress in advancing climate action, but achieving continued impact and results requires clearer focus, more deliberate prioritization of resources and stronger partnerships.

The recommendations of this report were developed based on industry research, lessons from a municipal scan, input from Council, and recommendations of the Auditor General.

Clarifying the City's Role in Community Climate Action

Staff recommend that the City continue to play a role in catalyzing community climate action, but with a more streamlined approach, concentrating on areas where the City has clear jurisdiction and effective policy levers, and focusing efforts on priority areas with the greatest potential impact that align with Council's strategic direction.

Staff are recommending a phased approach to community climate action, focusing City efforts on high-impact areas within core municipal responsibilities, while expanding

influence through strategic partnerships over time to catalyze and scale community climate action.

- **Core responsibilities** – areas under direct municipal control such as land use planning, transportation, infrastructure, and public safety.
- **Influence zones** – areas such as housing and energy systems where the City can shape outcomes by working with utilities, community organizations, industry, and other levels of government.

Recognizing that community action cannot be scaled by the City alone, staff will build on the current approach by strengthening partnerships and working with community organizations on targeted, high-impact initiatives that align with Council priorities. This ensures limited resources are used effectively, leverages municipal capabilities, and amplifies collective impact. Partnerships also provide added benefits such as access to external funding, expertise, and innovation, while strengthening community buy-in and ownership.

Establishing a Prioritization Framework

Staff are recommending a framework for prioritizing Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) projects and strategies and to guide allocation of the CCMP capital budget based on actions that align with municipal jurisdiction and have the potential to yield the greatest impact and reach in meeting Council climate goals. The framework emphasizes four criteria:

- **Impact** – the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen resilience, or mitigate climate risks.
- **Reach** – the project’s scalability, equity outcomes, and co-benefits.
- **Effort** – the resources required, including funding, time, and staff capacity.
- **Confidence** – the feasibility of implementation and likelihood of success.

This framework represents a shift from spreading resources across many smaller initiatives to focusing on fewer, higher-impact projects directly aligned with Council’s strategic priorities.

In the 2026 Draft Capital Budget, a dedicated envelope will be proposed to be allocated within the Climate Change Master Plan program account. The intent is to move beyond using this fund to close immediate organizational gaps, and increasingly focus on

implementing higher impact initiatives, including piloting innovative approaches with greater potential impact.

Work that is advanced through other capital or major infrastructure projects will continue to be funded and prioritized through the respective departmental and City processes.

Core Priorities Until 2027

Until the CCMP is refreshed in 2027, staff recommend focusing on three core priorities that reflect:

1. **Climate Adaptation and Resiliency** – Climate Ready Ottawa: advancing actions to prepare communities, infrastructure, and vulnerable populations for extreme heat, flooding, and severe weather.
2. **Climate Mitigation** – Energy Evolution: continuing progress in areas under municipal control, including building retrofits, energy transition, and initiatives to maximize impact of the City’s significant investments in transit, active transportation, and waste diversion.
3. **Enhancing Community Partnerships** - building on existing collaborations, deepening strategic engagement with stakeholders, and raising public awareness of climate programs and resources.

The Climate Change and Resiliency Services team will maintain a leadership role in embedding climate considerations into departmental planning and operations, while advancing the core priority actions identified in this report through continued collaboration across the organization.

The recommendations of this report can be implemented within budgeted operational and capital envelopes as they relate to how the City prioritizes actions, enables community action, and can be scaled; there are no new financial implications for the City as a result of this report.

RÉSUMÉ

La Ville d’Ottawa continue de réaliser des progrès significatifs dans la promotion de l’action climatique. Cependant, pour obtenir des résultats durables, il faut une orientation plus claire, une priorisation plus réfléchie des ressources et des partenariats plus solides.

Le présent rapport donne suite à deux des sept recommandations de la [Vérification 2024 du Plan directeur sur les changements climatiques](#) (PDCC), en ce qui a trait aux précisions à apporter au rôle de la Ville dans la promotion de l'action communautaire et dans la priorisation d'un ensemble réaliste de projets et d'activités clés dans le cadre du PDCC. Ce rapport donne également suite à la [motion n° 2023-28-17](#), qui comprend des directives sur la priorisation, sur l'affectation du financement des infrastructures et sur la priorité à donner aux secteurs relevant des pouvoirs de la municipalité.

Les recommandations du rapport ont été inspirées de recherches sectorielles, des enseignements tirés d'une analyse municipale, des commentaires des membres du Conseil et des recommandations de la vérificatrice générale.

Préciser le rôle de la Ville dans l'action climatique à l'échelle communautaire

Le personnel recommande que la Ville continue à jouer un rôle de catalyseur de l'action climatique à l'échelle communautaire, mais en adoptant une approche allégée, en se concentrant sur les secteurs pour lesquels la Ville dispose d'une compétence claire et de leviers politiques efficaces, et en ciblant ses efforts sur les domaines prioritaires pouvant générer les impacts les plus importants et correspondant à l'orientation stratégique du Conseil municipal.

Le personnel recommande à la Ville d'adopter une approche progressive de l'action climatique à l'échelle communautaire, en se concentrant sur les secteurs à fort impact relevant des principales responsabilités municipales, tout en élargissant son influence au fil du temps grâce à des partenariats stratégiques afin de catalyser et d'intensifier l'action climatique.

- **Principales responsabilités** – dossiers sous le contrôle direct de la municipalité, tels que l'aménagement du territoire, les transports, les infrastructures et la sécurité publique.
- **Zones d'influence** – domaines tels que le logement et les systèmes énergétiques, dans lesquels la Ville peut influencer sur les résultats en collaborant avec les services publics, les organisations communautaires, l'industrie et d'autres paliers de gouvernement.

Comme la Ville ne peut à elle seule intensifier l'action communautaire, le personnel s'appuiera sur l'approche actuelle en renforçant les partenariats et en collaborant avec les organismes communautaires sur des initiatives ciblées et à fort impact qui

correspondent aux priorités du Conseil municipal. Cela permet de garantir une utilisation efficace des ressources limitées, de tirer parti des capacités municipales et d'amplifier l'impact collectif. Les partenariats offrent également des avantages supplémentaires, tels que l'accès à des sources de financement externes, à une expertise et à une capacité d'innovation, tout en renforçant l'adhésion de la collectivité à cette action et en lui donnant l'occasion de se l'approprier.

Établir un cadre de priorisation

Le personnel recommande un cadre pour prioriser les projets et les stratégies du Plan directeur sur les changements climatiques (PDCC) et pour guider l'affectation des fonds d'immobilisations du PDCC en fonction des mesures qui relèvent de la compétence municipale et qui sont susceptibles d'avoir le plus grand impact et la plus grande portée possible pour atteindre les objectifs climatiques du Conseil municipal. Le cadre met l'accent sur quatre critères:

- **Impact** – le potentiel de réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, de renforcement de la résilience ou d'atténuation des risques climatiques.
- **Portée** – le caractère évolutif des projets, leurs résultats en matière d'équité et leurs avantages connexes.
- **Effort** – les ressources nécessaires, notamment le financement, le temps et les capacités du personnel.
- **Confiance** – la faisabilité de la mise en œuvre et la probabilité de succès.

Ce cadre représente un changement par rapport à la répartition des ressources entre de nombreuses initiatives de moindre envergure, et vise plutôt un nombre plus restreint de projets à fort impact, directement alignés sur les priorités stratégiques du Conseil.

Dans le budget provisoire d'immobilisation de 2026, il sera proposé d'allouer une enveloppe dédiée dans le compte du programme du Plan directeur sur les changements climatiques. L'objectif consiste à ne plus utiliser ce fonds pour combler des lacunes organisationnelles immédiates, mais de se concentrer davantage sur la mise en œuvre d'initiatives à plus fort impact, notamment en testant des approches innovantes ayant un impact potentiel plus important.

Les travaux réalisés dans le cadre d'autres projets d'investissement ou d'infrastructure majeurs continueront d'être financés et priorisés par les directions générales de la Ville et selon les processus établis à cet égard.

Grandes priorités jusqu'en 2027

D'ici la mise à jour du PDCC en 2027, le personnel recommande de se concentrer sur trois grandes priorités qui reflètent :

4. **L'adaptation au climat et la résilience** – Parés pour les changements climatiques Ottawa : faire progresser les mesures visant à préparer les collectivités, les infrastructures et les populations vulnérables aux épisodes de chaleur accablante, aux inondations et aux conditions météorologiques extrêmes.
5. **L'atténuation des effets des changements climatiques** – Évolution énergétique : poursuivre les progrès dans les domaines relevant de la compétence municipale, notamment la rénovation des bâtiments, la transition énergétique et les initiatives visant à maximiser l'impact des grands investissements de la Ville dans les transports en commun, les transports actifs et le réacheminement des déchets.
6. **Le renforcement des partenariats communautaires** – S'appuyer sur les collaborations existantes, approfondir l'engagement stratégique avec les parties prenantes et sensibiliser le public aux ressources et aux programmes liés au climat.

L'équipe des Services des changements climatiques et de la résilience continuera de jouer un rôle de premier plan dans l'intégration des considérations climatiques à la planification et aux opérations de la Direction générale, tout en faisant progresser les actions prioritaires dégagées dans le présent rapport grâce à une collaboration continue à l'échelle de la Ville.

Les recommandations du présent rapport peuvent être mises en œuvre dans le cadre des enveloppes budgétaires actuelles destinées aux opérations et aux immobilisations, puisqu'elles concernent la manière dont la Ville priorise ses interventions, favorise l'action communautaire et l'amplifie. Le rapport n'entraîne aucune nouvelle incidence financière pour la Ville.

BACKGROUND

In January 2020, Council approved the City's [Climate Change Master Plan \(CCMP\) \[ACS2019-PIE-EDP-0053\]](#) - the City's overarching framework for how it will mitigate and adapt to the current and future effects of climate change. The CCMP sets a vision for Ottawa to become a clean, renewable, and resilient city by 2050. It outlines how the City

will work towards achieving its long-term goals of net zero by 2050, in alignment with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aim to limit global temperature rise to below 1.5°C. The CCMP is structured around two core strategies: [Energy Evolution](#), which guides climate mitigation efforts (reducing or preventing GHG emissions) and outlined what it would take to achieve the City's net zero goals by 2050, and [Climate Ready Ottawa](#) which will guide climate resiliency efforts (how we prepare for the impacts of climate change).

In December 2023, Council carried [Motion No. 2023-28-17](#), directing staff to develop a prioritization framework to guide disbursements associated with capital fund 911372 (Climate Change Master Plan) and emphasize projects that will i) directly impact corporate emissions, ii) be aligned with actions that the municipality can take, iii) advance the 2022-2026 term of council priorities, and iv) report back on key performance indicators through the normal reporting schedule.

In June 2024, Council received the [Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan](#), which found that the City has reached a “crossroads” whereby decisions have to be made that will impact the direction, priorities and resources related to this portfolio. The audit noted that there is a need for realignment of the CCMP priorities with the City's current strategic direction and to maximize the limited resources available. Response to the recommendations is underway and on track for completion in 2025.

This report is seeking Council's direction on two of the seven audit recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Clarify the role of the City for community action

- Clarify the role of the City in catalyzing community action to ensure there is alignment between Council's strategic direction and the priorities of the City.

Recommendation 2: Prioritization of key projects and activities

- Establish a holistic and realistic list of priority projects to address both mitigation and adaptation concurrently to achieve the City's climate change goals.

This should:

- Align with the City's strategic direction
- Be based on the most significant risks to the City
- Have buy-in across the organization

- Reference, as applicable, the extent to which priorities will be addressed by plans that are currently in development (e.g., Asset Management Plans, Master Plans, Long Range Financial Plans), and
- Clearly articulate funding and resourcing strategies, including where external partnerships/funding can be leveraged (considering the other priorities of the City).

In 2025, the City allocated \$6 million into the CCMP capital budget to fund the master plan's priorities. This represents about 1.5 per cent of the City's total climate related spending, which is allocated to advance initiatives that help build a City that is green and resilient.

This report responds to the motion and Auditor General's recommendations by proposing a role for the City to play in community action and introducing a Prioritization Framework to select projects and strategies and guide Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) capital investments toward initiatives within municipal jurisdiction that deliver the greatest potential impact and reach in advancing Council's climate goals. The report also identifies a defined set of core, realistic priorities to focus the City's limited resources on that advance both mitigation and adaptation efforts until the CCMP is refreshed in 2027.

DISCUSSION

The Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) identified a misalignment between the City's Term of Council Priorities and the objectives of the CCMP, particularly with respect to community climate action. It also underscored the need for a realistic and prioritized set of initiatives that balance mitigation and adaptation while aligning with broader City priorities.

In response, staff have developed recommendations informed by an industry scan and best practices review of municipal climate governance strategies, as well as input gathered through a series of facilitated workshops with members of Council in July and August 2025. These recommendations also reflect lessons learned from the City's ongoing climate action efforts to date.

City's Role in Community Action – Legislative Landscape and Municipal Role

Climate change is a shared responsibility across all levels of government, private industry, businesses, and residents. Each level of government has a distinct role in influencing that action:

- **Federal** – regulates emissions, sets national standards, and provides funding.
- **Provincial** – governs energy systems, environmental conservation programs, land use, building codes, and transportation policy.
- **Municipal** – implements land use planning, transportation systems, emergency management, supports community programs, and where applicable local delivery and implementation of federal and provincial regulations, and incentive programs.

The City's primary role is to operate within its mandate, exercise influence where appropriate, and collaborate with partners to support coordinated climate action.

In Ontario, municipalities are uniquely positioned to influence both climate mitigation and resiliency outcomes, though the degree of control varies across sectors.

Municipalities have the greatest ability to act within their own operations and can influence broader community outcomes by enabling community programs, partnering with utilities, developers, and community partners, and shaping public behaviour.

Municipalities have limited to no control over industrial, commercial, and institutional operations and energy use, Provincial building codes, infrastructure standards and vehicle standards and energy generation and grid planning.

Municipal Scan - Municipal Climate Action in Canada

The City commissioned KPMG's report 'Analysis of municipal leading practices in climate' (January 2025) this work identified that Cities who are fairly advanced in corporate climate action (e.g., Vancouver, Toronto) are continuing to advance corporate actions and transition to maintenance phases while starting to shift from corporate to community-focused action. As an example of this, the KPMG study notes Calgary has a history of prioritizing corporate emissions projects, however, with these well established, the focus is on maintenance and expansion. Emerging priorities for these municipalities include deep building retrofits, district energy systems, electrification and energy storage and resilience planning (e.g., flooding, heat).

The research shows that municipalities across Canada are central to climate action in the areas of mitigation and adaptation. Municipalities are facing increasing pressure from climate events like flooding and must prioritize and focus efforts and funding to continue to respond to the effects of climate change and reach stated goals. The central role of municipalities in climate action stems from their direct ownership of and responsibility for critical systems such as infrastructure, land use planning, emergency

response, and community services. These are powerful levers for both reducing emissions and building resilience. Moreover, municipalities are uniquely positioned put in place community-specific solutions, implement place-based solutions, and integrate climate considerations into everyday decision-making at the local level.

Municipalities are focusing on areas within municipal authority as the most effective way to drive climate goals. Municipalities are also focusing on investment in the areas with the greatest potential for impact to maximize limited resources, and where there are mature climate change practices, are shifting toward community-focused climate initiatives with common approaches including deep building retrofits, community solar and district energy systems, electric vehicles and active transportation, tree planting and nature based solutions, and resilience planning targeted most significant local risks.

A white paper summary of the municipal scan and supporting research is attached as Document 1.

Engagement with Members of Council

Staff engaged members of Council to review the findings of the municipal scan and related research, seek input on the City's potential role in catalyzing community climate action, and obtain feedback on a draft Prioritization Framework. Twenty-one of twenty-four Councillors participated in facilitated workshops. There was unanimous support for the City to play a role in community climate action, with a focus on areas where the City has direct authority, policy levers, or tools to drive meaningful change. Councillors emphasized the importance of strengthening strategic partnerships, pursuing external funding opportunities, and enhancing both the visibility and accessibility of existing climate programs through improved education and outreach. They also highlighted the opportunity to collaborate more closely with the private sector, non-profits, and community organizations to advance mitigation efforts in areas outside of the City's direct control.

With respect to the draft Prioritization Framework, Councillors expressed overall agreement with the proposed criteria and ranked "impact" and "reach" as the most important considerations. Feedback emphasized the need to focus on initiatives with the greatest potential benefits, particularly those that strengthen community and corporate resilience, protect infrastructure, and improve preparedness. Councillors also identified the importance of retaining flexibility to support community-led actions, respond to emerging trends, and ensure integration across departments, while keeping efforts aligned with municipal authority. Diverging views were expressed on the extent of the

City's advocacy role, the level of support for small-scale community projects, and the prioritization of specific initiatives.

A more detailed summary of feedback from Councillor Engagement is attached as Document 3.

Recommendation 1 – City's Role in Community Climate Action

Staff recommend that the City continue to play a role in catalyzing community action, but with a more streamlined approach, concentrating on areas where the City has clear jurisdiction and effective policy levers, and focusing efforts on priority areas with the greatest potential impact that align with Council's strategic direction.

Staff are recommending a phased approach to community climate action, focusing City efforts on high-impact areas within core municipal responsibilities, while expanding influence through strategic partnerships over time to catalyze and scale community climate action.

- **Core responsibilities:** areas the City directly controls, such as land use planning, transportation, infrastructure, and public safety, where it can lead by example and achieve measurable outcomes.
- **Influence zones:** areas like housing and energy systems where the City lacks direct control but can shape results through partnerships and coordinated efforts. The City plays an important role as a connector, linking community organizations, industry partners, and other stakeholders to foster collaboration and accelerate progress.

Recognizing that community action cannot be scaled by the City alone, staff will look to further strengthen and build new strategic collaborations. Working with community partners on targeted, high-impact initiatives that align with Council priorities, as outlined later in this report, will ensure City resources are used effectively, the City's unique capabilities are leveraged, and amplify collective impact. Strategic collaborations also bring added benefits, including access to external expertise, funding, and innovation, while fostering stronger community buy-in and shared ownership of results.

This recommendation responds directly to the Auditor General's call for greater clarity on the City's role in catalyzing community climate action. By aligning with select Council priorities and defining where the City will lead versus where it will influence, this approach avoids inefficient use of finite funds and resources and ensures accountability for measurable results.

Recommendation 2 – Prioritization Framework

Climate action presents a significant opportunity, but also a challenge. As outlined in the 2025 Climate Change Master Plan Progress Update, GHG Inventories Report (ACS2025-SI-CCR-0009), while the City of Ottawa has made meaningful progress to date, advancing climate action requires making deliberate choices moving forward. The City cannot take on every climate challenge at once, but with a focused, prioritized, and partnership-driven approach, Ottawa can continue to lead by example and enable broader community progress.

Staff are recommending a framework for prioritizing Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) projects and strategies and to guide allocation of the CCMP capital budget that is based on actions that align with municipal authority and have the potential to yield the greatest impact and reach in meeting Council stated climate goals.

This approach represents a shift in direction, focusing on fewer, higher-impact projects that directly advance Council's strategic priorities and where the City has clear authority to act and deliver measurable benefits for residents. This more targeted focus will ensure that limited resources are directed to the areas where they can have the greatest potential impact. In the past, efforts were spread across many smaller initiatives in response to the urgency of climate change, but this approach stretched resources thin and made it difficult to maximize outcomes. The proposed refinement will enable the City to concentrate on the most effective opportunities while maintaining accountability and alignment with Council's priorities.

Staff are recommending that priority projects, actions and capital budget allocation be assessed and advanced based on:

- **Impact:** Measures the potential benefits of the project, including greenhouse gas emission reductions, climate resiliency, risk mitigation.
- **Reach:** Assesses the project's equity outcomes, scalability, and potential co-benefits.
- **Effort:** Estimates the resources required to implement the project, including time, funding, and staff capacity.
- **Confidence:** Evaluates the feasibility of the project and the level of risk associated with achieving its intended impact, cost, and reach.

The Framework will be used to guide project selection under the current CCMP and in

the refresh of the CCMP planned for 2027. Prior to consideration and project scoring, all projects will be screened and scoped, to ensure they are viable in the time frame and budget is available and actions align with the City's role in climate action.

The Prioritization Framework is attached as Document 2.

Core Priorities Until Climate Change Master Plan Refresh

Until the refresh of the CCMP in 2027, staff are recommending a focus on a defined set of core priorities in line with the Prioritization Framework to ensure the City's limited resources are directed to impactful, feasible initiatives that align with Council's Strategic Priorities, advance mitigation and adaptation actions and enhance community partnerships.

These priorities also consider the emerging and quickly accelerating trends that are creating new pressures and opportunities for municipalities. For example:

- **The green energy transition** is accelerating— placing increasing pressure on municipalities to support grid readiness, advance community energy planning and transportation policy and infrastructure, and enable innovative solutions such as district energy and distributed energy systems.
- **Post-pandemic emissions rebound** – fuel consumption and GHGs have returned to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.
- **Local economic development and resilience** – preparing for the impacts of climate change and strengthening energy resiliency and supply are increasingly important to support sustained economic growth.
- **Shifting federal and provincial policies** – Federal policy changes impact supply chain and economic context, for example carbon tax changes may impact the business case for corporate emission reduction projects. Provincial limits on municipally driven green building standards are pushing municipalities toward collaborative solutions like incentives and district energy systems to help drive building related emissions reductions.
- **Significant equity considerations-** Social and economic inequalities limit participation in the energy transition and increase vulnerability to rising energy costs and climate impacts, with marginalized communities disproportionately affected by extreme weather, food insecurity, and health risks.

Priority 1: Climate Adaptation and Resiliency – Climate Ready Ottawa

Climate adaptation means preparing for the impacts of climate change – including rising temperatures, more rainfall and extreme weather such as wind or ice storms. Ottawa is

already experiencing the growing impacts of climate change: more frequent extreme weather events, flooding, heatwaves, and poor air quality. These events have cost the City over \$36 million in the past eight years.

The City has already taken steps to reduce risks by protecting the community and services from extreme weather and climate change, including through master plans, asset management and emergency planning, but more action is needed to address remaining risks to the community and the City's infrastructure. In October, staff will bring forward Climate Ready Ottawa to Committee and Council. The report will include the recommended long-term strategy and short term 5-year action plan to tackle remaining gaps and accelerate efforts to prepare for rising climate risks from extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms.

The strategy will present for Council's consideration seven core areas of focus related to resilient communities, buildings and infrastructure, natural environment, and extreme weather preparedness to deliver a climate ready future. A series of realistic, prioritized, and cost-effective actions under each of the seven core areas of focus will be recommended to reduce service disruptions, safeguard critical assets, avoid costly emergency repairs and claims, build community preparedness, and protect vulnerable populations. Council's approval of the strategy will solidify core adaptation priorities for staff until 2030.

Priority 2: Mitigation – Energy Evolution

Climate Mitigation refers to reducing or preventing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to global climate change. While municipal emissions represent about five per cent of Ottawa's total GHG emissions, municipalities have influence over approximately 50 per cent of community emissions—particularly through land use planning, transportation, building policy, and infrastructure investment.

As reflected in the 2025 Climate Change Master Plan Progress Update and GHG Inventories Report, the City is making progress where it has direct control: electrifying fleet, advancing building retrofits and energy efficiency, expanding waste diversion, adding renewable energy, and planting trees. On transportation, major investments in light rail transit, transitways and continuous bus lane projects, zero-emission buses, and cycling and pedestrian networks are advancing efforts to shift trips to transit and active modes.

This work has continued to advance through leadership and collaboration with departments across the organization and the Climate Change and Resiliency Services

team will continue to work in close collaboration with departments leading key initiatives, helping to embed a climate lens into master plans and programs and supporting the delivery of impactful, climate-resilient outcomes. A climate lens is now embedded across all major City plans and is being applied consistently to the capital budget process, with ongoing work to deepen its use across operations.

Given the current emissions profile and this momentum, staff recommend continued advancement of the following core priorities between now and the refresh of the CCMP in 2027 to ensure the City's limited resources are directed toward impactful and feasible initiatives including:

Corporate mitigation:

The City has made significant progress in building retrofits, electrifying vehicles, and reducing waste emissions. In addition, climate change has been embedded in master plans, and other strategic guiding documents for the City. The corporate mitigation priorities build on existing momentum and emerging opportunities due to technology and industry advancements and align with planned work across the organization.

- Advancing City building retrofits (e.g. – heat pump installations, high-performance windows, lighting retrofits, air-sealing)
- Corporate fleet electrification implementation (ego – charging infrastructure, facility electrical upgrades)
- Investment in renewable energy; exploration of renewable natural gas (RNG) production, and installation of solar rooftops

Departmental action on other priority initiatives outlined in Energy Evolution that are underway and have been prioritized in their respective workplans, Master Plans and long-range financial plans will continue as planned (ex. implementing Green Fleet Strategy, exploring renewable energy generation such as RNG, etc.).

Community:

The City has invested significantly in waste reduction, transit and active transportation, and advanced voluntary building programs through external funding. These initiatives have a potential for significant impact with strong participation. The community actions will focus on encouraging behavioral change and partnering to deliver local programs to maximize impact.

- Continue delivering existing commercial and residential building programs (Better

Buildings Ottawa, Better Homes Ottawa Loan Program) that support retrofit projects and reduce emissions. This will include program reviews prior to conclusion of current funding support from FCM and NRCan.

- Develop and implement a District Energy Strategy and advance community energy plans with partners (e.g., utilities), and advance policy and incentive tools through municipal housing projects on City-owned surplus lands within the City's authority.
- Support and enable electric vehicle charging investment in community spaces through partnerships and zoning policy updates.

Actions that have been deprioritized at this stage generally fall outside the City's direct jurisdiction, are unlikely to yield the highest impact relative to the effort required or represent more aggressive policy measures that may not yet align with community readiness for behavior change.

This approach enables the City to focus limited resources on initiatives with the greatest potential for implementation and emissions reduction in the near term, while keeping other actions available for future reassessment.

In coordination with the CCMP refresh, updates will be made to the Energy Evolution model to reflect current conditions and future projections. This will include revising the baseline scenario—which represents the City's expected emissions trajectory under existing policies, programs, and population forecasts—to incorporate community projects already underway. Project options will also be re-evaluated through detailed analysis to identify additional opportunities for emissions reductions. The refresh will provide an opportunity to revisit lower-priority actions and consider their advancement as conditions, jurisdictional tools, and community readiness evolve.

Priority 3- Enhancing Community Partnerships

To advance meaningful community climate action, the Climate Change and Resiliency Service will pursue a three-pronged approach:

1. Continue Successful Collaborations

Building on existing partnerships—such as with EnviroCentre, Hydro Ottawa, and Ottawa Public Health—the City will maintain and strengthen proven initiatives that deliver measurable climate benefits.

2. Deepen Engagement and Strategic Collaboration

A department-led working group will be established to convene stakeholders around focused priorities with the greatest potential for emissions reductions and climate adaptation. This inclusive forum will enable community organizations and businesses to contribute their expertise, resources, and local knowledge to support coordinated efforts towards implementation.

3. Increase Visibility and Access to Climate Programs

The City will enhance public awareness of existing climate programs and resources, making it easier for residents, businesses, and community groups to participate and benefit.

This approach will help pool resources, align efforts, and accelerate progress on climate goals. By participating in the working group or partnering on specific initiatives, community organizations and businesses can play a vital role in shaping and delivering place-based solutions that reflect local needs and opportunities. The City will stay agile and responsive to emerging opportunities that align with its climate goals, recognizing the rapidly evolving landscape of climate, technology, and energy demand.

Department Led Working Group

To support this, staff will establish a focused Working Group, led by the Climate Change and Resiliency Service Area. This group will bring together strategic partners, to pool resources, coordinate action and coordinate community action. The group's work will be aligned with the Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) priority actions for climate mitigation and adaptation, as described in priority 1 and 2 above. This targeted approach will help concentrate collective efforts on actions with the greatest potential to strengthen community preparedness and achieve CCMP targets.

Raising Public Awareness of Climate Programs and Resources

To enhance public engagement and transparency around climate action, the City of Ottawa will implement a communications strategy to promote its existing climate programs. This will include a web presence that serves as a one-stop resource for residents, businesses, and community groups and will feature summaries of key public-facing climate programs, making it easier for users to understand available tools and initiatives. Additional outreach efforts include launching a public-facing greenhouse gas emissions dashboard, publishing climate newsletters to the city's website, distributing materials to community partners, and cross-promoting related initiatives such as Stage 2 LRT, the Zero Emission Bus program, active transportation, and waste reduction. These efforts support Ottawa's three core climate strategies: the Climate Change

Master Plan (net-zero by 2050), Energy Evolution (sector-specific emissions reductions), and the Climate Ready Ottawa (preparing for future climate risks), ensuring residents are informed and empowered to contribute to the City's climate goals.

Update on Remaining Recommendations: Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan

Staff continue to focus on implementation of the seven recommendations of the Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan and aims to complete these by the end of 2025.

Progress has been made including:

- Strategic Initiatives Department established (April 2024), including a new Climate Change and Resiliency (CCR) Service Area with GM and Director roles.
- Climate Change Tiger Team re-engaged (July 2025) as the Climate Change Executive Steering Committee, now positioned as a strategic advisory body.
- Re-engaged the Climate Change Council Sponsors Group August 2025 to provide oversight and guidance of the CCMP
- Development of an integrated governance framework underway to enhance internal and external collaboration (e.g., Department Led Working Group). This integrated framework will help to complete governance recommendations from the Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan.
- Identifying quantitative metrics for CCMP priorities, including updated mitigation indicators, and new resiliency indicators developed through Climate Ready Ottawa.
- Key performance indicators will be publicly reported in future through annual Climate Change Master Plan updates and public dashboard to improve transparency and accountability

Next steps

Pending Council's consideration of the recommendations outlined in this report, staff will proceed with:

- Planning, communication, and implementation of the City's role in community climate actions, the Prioritization Framework, and core priorities for climate mitigation, adaptation and enhancing community partnerships as described in

this report.

- Completing implementation of the seven recommendations of the Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) in 2025. Once the Office of the Auditor General is satisfied that the City has addressed the recommendations of the Audit of the Climate Change Master Plan, a summary of results will be provided to Council via memo.
- Preparing for the 2027 refresh of the CCMP, using the definition of the City's role in community climate action and the prioritization framework to guide project selection under the current plan and inform the upcoming update. This will be coordinated with the updates to the Energy Evolution model.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation of the report is implemented from within existing operating and capital budget(s), as well as external funding opportunities. Future requirements are subject to Council approval through the annual budget process and in accordance with master plans and long-range financial plans.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in this report.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This section is not applicable as it is a city-wide report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

There are no Advisory Committees that would have provided comments related to this report.

CONSULTATION

There was no direct public consultation related to the recommendations for this report. The Climate Change and Resiliency Team have engaged with the public on specific climate actions, development of Energy Evolution and Climate Ready Ottawa. Staff will continue to engage the public on specific climate actions, and as part of the governance structure for the Climate Change Master Plan staff are working to establish a Department Led Working Group to coordinate and engage on climate related matters.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

All actions taken under the Climate Change Master Plan will follow the City's accessibility legislative framework including the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, 191/11* and meet the City of Ottawa Accessibility Design Standards to the greatest extent possible. This report is primarily administrative in nature and has no associated accessibility impacts.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

As per the requirements in O.Reg 588/17, Council adopted a Comprehensive Asset Management Policy [Comprehensive Asset Management Policy](#) with a commitment to integrate risk management and climate adaptation strategies through the consideration of operational resilience (e.g., increased maintenance due to extreme weather impacts); service level risks and potential funding requirements to adapt; lifecycle planning to address climate vulnerabilities and long-term service risks; climate mitigation goals, including greenhouse gas reduction targets; and disaster planning and contingency funding for infrastructure resilience.

The 2024 Asset Management Plans identified the current state of infrastructure for City assets, including potential climate risks and opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resiliency. The 2025 Asset Management Plans added additional information regarding target levels of service (per Climate Change Master Plan, Energy Evolution, and Climate Resiliency Strategy), funding plans and service area gaps, risks to service, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation costs. The City's Comprehensive Asset Management Policy embeds climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience into infrastructure planning, investment and risk management to ensure long-term sustainability and service reliability.

When the City commits to the acquisition of new assets, including projects selected using the new prioritization framework, consideration must be given to the City's commitment to fund future operations, maintenance, and renewal costs. When reviewing the long-term impacts of asset acquisition, it is useful to consider the cumulative value and lifecycle costing of the acquired assets being taken on by the City.

CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations of this report will be used to inform and further advance the

Climate Change Master Plan and associated strategic documents Energy Evolution and Climate Ready Ottawa.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

No delegation of authority is being requested as part of this report.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Economic implications associated with the Climate Change Master Plan eight priorities will be explored and considered in the prioritization and identification of new projects advanced through the Climate Change Master Plan Prioritization Framework

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications associated with the Climate Change Master Plan eight priorities will be explored and considered in the prioritization and identification of new projects advanced through the Climate Change Master Plan Prioritization Framework.

INDIGENOUS, GENDER AND EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

This report recommends an embedded equity lens in the prioritization of projects advanced through the Climate Change Master Plan Prioritization Framework

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Two environmental corporate strategic risks were identified and are being tracked through the City's Strategic Plan monitoring efforts (the last update was received by Council on June 11, 2025):

- Extreme weather and climate impacts - Risk of increases in extreme weather events and climate impacts on infrastructure, public health and well-being, the natural environment, and the economy.
- Climate Change GHG reduction targets; Energy Evolution - Risk of failure to meet short, mid, and long-term corporate and community GHG reduction targets due to delayed or inadequate implementation of Energy Evolution.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no anticipated rural only implications.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no anticipated technology implications.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The recommendations of this report support improving alignment of the Climate Change Master Plan and the 2023-2026 Term of Council Priorities in support of creating a city that is green and resilient.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Whitepaper on Climate Change

Document 2 – Climate Change Prioritization Framework

Document 3 – Consultation with Members of Council

DISPOSITION

The Strategic Initiatives Department will continue to coordinate the advancement of the Climate Change Master Plan priorities in collaboration with all City departments.

DOCUMENT 1

Whitepaper on Climate Change

Date: July 11, 2025

Emerging Climate Trends: A Need for Coordinated Action

Ottawa is already experiencing the growing impacts of climate change: more frequent extreme weather events, flooding, heatwaves, and poor air quality. These events have cost the City over \$36 million in the past eight years. By contrast, Public Safety Canada estimates that every dollar invested in disaster mitigation and climate change adaptation projects saves \$4 to \$10 in recovery costs¹. [The Climate Projections for the National Capital Region](#) included low, moderate, and high emission scenarios. If global greenhouse gas mitigation objectives from the 2015 Paris Agreement are achieved, the actual emissions will fall between the low and moderate scenarios. The rate and magnitude of climate change will depend on future global greenhouse gas emissions; global emissions are currently tracking above the moderate emission scenario.

At the same time, emerging trends are creating new pressures and opportunities for municipalities:

- The green energy transition is accelerating— placing increasing pressure on municipalities to support grid readiness, advance community energy planning and transportation policy and infrastructure, and enable innovative solutions such as district energy and distributed energy systems.
- Post-pandemic emissions rebound – fuel consumption and GHGs have returned to or exceeded pre-pandemic levels.
- Local economic development and resilience – preparing for the impacts of climate change and strengthening energy resiliency and supply are increasingly important to support sustained economic growth.
- Shifting federal and provincial policies – Federal policy changes impact supply chain and economic context, for example carbon tax changes may impact the business case for corporate emission reduction projects. Provincial limits on municipally driven green building standards are pushing municipalities toward collaborative solutions like incentives and district energy systems to help drive building related emissions reductions.

- Significant equity considerations- Social and economic inequalities make it harder for many people to participate in the energy transition, as they often lack the financial resources, access to information, or control over housing needed to adopt clean technologies. These same groups are more vulnerable to rising energy costs, as they spend a larger share of their income on utilities. Additionally, marginalized communities are often more exposed to the impacts of climate change—such as extreme weather, food insecurity, and health risks—and face greater challenges recovering from climate events

These trends underscore the evolving role of municipalities in enabling local climate and energy solutions—through coordinated planning, strategic partnerships, and targeted investments that align with both community needs and broader policy shifts.

Understanding the Legislative Landscape

While climate change is a shared responsibility across all levels of government, meaningful progress also depends on action from private industry, businesses, and residents. Each level of government has a distinct role in influencing that action:

- **Federal** – regulates emissions, sets national standards, and provides funding.
- **Provincial** – governs energy systems, environmental conservation programs, land use, building codes, and transportation policy.
- **Municipal** – implements land use planning, transportation systems, emergency management, supports community programs, and where applicable local delivery and implementation of federal and provincial regulations, and incentive programs.

The City's primary role is to operate within its mandate, exercise influence where appropriate, and collaborate with partners to support coordinated climate action.

Municipal Climate Action Across Canada

FCM estimates that 63 per cent of Canadian municipalities have climate action plans; 52 per cent have GHG targets. The City commissioned KPMG's report 'Analysis of municipal leading practices in climate' (January 2025) this work identified that Cities who are fairly advanced in corporate climate action (e.g., Vancouver, Toronto) are continuing to advance corporate actions and transition to maintenance phases while starting to shift from corporate to community-focused action.

“Municipalities are shifting focus from corporate initiatives to community-benefiting projects, with increasing resources and budgets allocated to these initiatives. This change is essential for meaningful impact, as about 95 per cent of a city’s emissions represent community emissions.”

As an example of this, the KPMG study notes Calgary has a history of prioritizing corporate emissions projects; however, with these well established, the focus is on maintenance and expansion. The community program budget has seen a very significant increase and there are dedicated resources for the development of community initiatives. ²

Emerging priorities for these municipalities include:

- Deep building retrofits
- District energy systems
- Electrification and energy storage
- Resilience planning (e.g., flooding, heat)

Areas of Influence and Control

In Ontario, municipalities are uniquely positioned to influence both climate mitigation and resiliency outcomes, though the degree of control varies across sectors.

Areas of Direct Control

Municipalities have the greatest ability to act within their own operations. This includes:

- Corporate assets and operations – retrofitting municipal buildings, electrifying fleets, emergency management, greening procurement, emergency management and public health response, etc.
- Land use planning and development approvals – guiding how communities grow through Official Plans, zoning, and site plan control.
- Transportation infrastructure – managing local transit, active transportation, and road networks.
- Stormwater, parks, and emergency management – integrating climate resilience into municipal services and infrastructure.

Areas of Influence

Municipalities can influence broader community outcomes by:

- Enabling community programs – such as home energy retrofits, tree planting, and flood mitigation education and support.
- Partnering with utilities, developers, and community partners – to enable projects like district energy systems and resilient community hubs.
- Shaping public behaviour – through education, outreach, and incentive programs.

Areas with Limited or No Control

Municipalities have little to no authority over:

- Industrial, and institutional operations and energy use – which is primarily regulated by provincial and federal governments.
- Provincial building codes, infrastructure standards and vehicle standards – which are regulated at the provincial and federal level, the City has a limited role to play enabling changes and updates to these at the local level.
- Energy generation and grid planning – governed by provincial legislation and managed by utilities.

Municipalities are also uniquely positioned to access several funding resources to support climate action. Climate Change projects have a significant track record of accessing these funds. Successful City of Ottawa funding applications since 2021 include:

- \$350 million funding grant from Infrastructure Canada and a \$380 million loan from the Canada Infrastructure Bank for zero emission buses.
- \$6M in grant and loan from FCM to support the Better Homes Ottawa Loan Program.
- Approximately \$1.5 million in adaptation funding and \$1 million in mitigation funding, supporting 10 individual projects.

Municipalities are important actors in driving local implementation and convening strategic partnerships to align efforts across sectors. Strategic prioritization should be used to ensure that municipal resources are focused where they can deliver the greatest impact.

Municipal Levers to Support Climate Action

The City has several levers to influence community climate action—including coordination, education, incentives, and regulation—which are most effective when used as part of an integrated approach. There are limitations on the extent of power that can be exerted by local government. However, local authority is limited by financial constraints and jurisdictional boundaries. As a result, Ottawa’s ability to achieve broader community level climate goals depends on collaboration with senior governments, utilities, the housing and development sectors, community and social service sectors, and other partners operating within their respective mandates. ³.

City Levers to Support Community Action	Examples
Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with community groups, utilities, schools, developers ○ Zero carbon district energy system ○ Sewer Energy Exchange System
Education and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public information including targeted outreach to at-risk populations ○ Community emissions target setting and reporting on KPIs ○ Flood risk mapping ○ Better buildings benchmarking programs
Coordination and Corporate Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intergovernmental collaboration ○ Community emergency plans ○ Corporate case study examples ○ External governance and City-led or supported external working groups
Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost Share Grants: Residential flood protection, Rain Ready programs, Rural Clean Water ○ Compassionate grant program- Flood response ○ Local Improvement Charges ex: Better Homes Loan Program, Residential Resiliency Financing

Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active transportation networks ○ Flood protection structures ○ Right of way infrastructure ex: district energy Sewer energy exchange systems ○ Splash pads and misting stations
Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public transit network ○ Extreme weather planning & support ○ Public EV charging stations ○ Library education energy monitoring equipment loans
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development review ex: sewer design guidelines, development standards, community energy plans ○ Parking regulations ex: Zoning Bylaw, EV Parking ○ Business regulations Bylaw ex: e-scooters, property standards

Figure 2 Examples of municipal levers to support community climate action

DOCUMENT 2






Climate Change Prioritization Framework

The framework applies to work led by the Climate Change and Resiliency Service Area and Climate Change Master Plan projects funded through the Climate Change Master Plan budget. Projects embedded in other service areas of the organization will be subject to the processes and prioritization of the respective budgets, master plans and prioritization processes. Work to apply a climate lens to these processes ensures climate is considered within this work. The framework includes a **five-step prioritization process**:

1. **Set priorities**: Establish medium- and long-term goals by drawing from the Climate Change Master Plan, Energy Evolution, Climate Ready Ottawa, Term of Council Strategic Plans and Council directions.

2. **Identify projects:** Assess project readiness, strategic alignment, and the City's direct role using criteria such as jurisdiction, influence, and alignment with Council priorities.
3. **Screen projects:** Ensure alignment with scope and role of the City in climate action.
4. **Prioritize projects:** Evaluate based on four dimensions:
 - **Impact:** Measures the potential benefits of the project, including greenhouse gas emission reductions, climate resiliency, risk mitigation, and alignment with foundational priorities.
 - **Reach:** Assesses the project's equity outcomes, scalability, and potential co-benefits.
 - **Effort:** Estimates the resources required to implement the project, including time, funding, and staff capacity.
 - **Confidence:** Evaluates the feasibility of the project and the level of risk associated with achieving its intended impact, cost, and reach.
5. **Evaluate and refine:** Finalize initiatives based on constraints like budget, staffing, and legislative timelines. This selection determines what is above the line and will proceed forward, and below the line being deferred.

Climate Change Project Review Process

					
	Set priorities	Identify projects	Screen projects	Prioritize projects	Evaluate and refine
How?	<p>Identify medium and long term priorities and opportunities</p> <p>Identify key risks and opportunities for climate action</p> <p>Consider City of Ottawa's strategic priorities</p>	<p>Review long term strategies work done to date</p> <p>Review year ahead projects, and anticipated pressures</p> <p>High level screening to ensure readiness and alignment with CCMP goals</p> <p>Address core responsibilities and time constrained items first</p>	<p>Review for alignment with scope and role of the City</p> <p>Adjust project scope or approach if required</p>	<p>Prioritize projects; from opportunity and pressures list using project scoring criteria, to identify which projects will move forward at this time.</p>	<p>Evaluate against constraints; cost, staff resources, legislative agenda.</p> <p>Refine and adjust as required.</p>
Using What?	<p>Climate Change Master Plan</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>Consultations with climate change council sponsors group, climate change executive steering committee</p>	<p>Energy Evolution</p> <p>Climate Ready Ottawa</p> <p>Consult with key stakeholders on upcoming opportunities</p>	<p>Screening Criteria</p> <p>Funding opportunities</p>	<p>Reach</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Effort</p> <p>Confidence</p>	<p>CCMP KPIs</p> <p>CCMP Budget, staff and legislative agenda</p>

Set Priorities

The prioritization framework sets out a long- medium and short- term prioritization process to inform long term strategic planning as well as annual project budget review and allocations.

Long Term (8-10 year cycle)	Medium Term (Term of Council)	Short Term (annual)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Climate Change Master Plan sets out the long-term climate change priorities •Approved by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Term of Council CCMP Legislative Priorities reviewed with SLT and Climate Change Council Sponsors Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Annual budget set by Council per annual City budget process •Annual Work Plan and CCMP spending plan set through CCR budget prioritization strategy. •Approved by GM of Strategic Initiatives

This includes an ongoing process to re-evaluate priorities and respond to changing context while providing direction to support long term projects and initiatives. Ensuring continual clarity and alignment between the CCMP and the City's Strategic Plan.

Long-Term Priorities

The Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) outlines Ottawa's strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change through 2050. The vision of the Climate Change Master Plan is to take unprecedented, collective action that transitions Ottawa to a clean, renewable, and resilient city by 2050. It sets guiding principles, goals, GHG emission reduction targets, and priority actions. The plan is updated less frequently than the 4-year election cycle, providing continuity across terms of Council, and is integrated with other long-term City planning documents. Strategic targets and long-term budget prioritization are also embedded in the City's other master plans, asset management plans and long-range financial plans.

The next update of the Climate Change Master Plan is scheduled for 2027. The Climate Change Master Plan and other long-term strategic guiding documents are developed in consultation with the public, key stakeholders, staff and departments across the City, and City Council members.

Medium-Term Priorities

Informed by the Climate Change Master Plan, its supporting documents, the City's Strategic plan, and other Council directions, Staff will identify medium-term priorities.

These are the key priorities aligned with the term of Council focused on major projects requiring legislative direction, and/or major capital investment. The medium-term priorities will inform proposed projects and legislative planning and will be reviewed with the Senior Leadership Team and the Climate Change Council Sponsors Group.

Short-Term Priorities

The annual CCR Work Plan and CCMP budget are determined using the project scoring and screening process described in this document. This process will be applied to the CCMP budget and CCR service area resources. Additional department-led action to advance climate outcomes will continue to be tracked through the municipal budget climate lens.

Role of Climate Change Master Plan Budget

The Climate Change Master Plan sets out corporate and community emission reduction targets for Ottawa. To achieve the objectives of the Climate Change Master Plan and associated strategies embedded systemic change is required. The municipality cannot achieve this on its own, and the Climate Change Master Plan Budget is only a portion of the City's total spending on climate actions. To achieve the objectives of the Climate Change Master Plan it will be important that work is embedded throughout the City's budgeting and operational practices. In addition, work and investment across the community and other levels of government will be necessary.

The Climate Change Master Plan budget is intended to catalyze action and advance the Climate Change Master Plan. It will support activities led by Climate Change and Resiliency Service Area as well as support climate change work led by other departments. This includes efforts to: address critical gaps, provide incremental or foundational funding when opportunities emerge, and leverage other funding. Budget for individual large-scale projects or pressures embedded in City operations per corporate policies to be identified through the City's corporate budget process.

Identify Projects

The Climate Change and Resiliency Service area will collaborate with staff across the organization, and external parties where applicable, to identify projects or funding pressures supporting: the Climate Change Master Plan, Energy Evolution, Climate Ready Ottawa, Council motions, and emerging opportunities.

Projects may include incremental funding supporting other projects such as infrastructure and operational projects which add or pilot mitigation or adaptation elements not able to be funded through their typical budget source.

Screen Projects

Projects are first screened for readiness, and application to the climate change master plan directions. The screening step also ensures projects considered are focused on the City's unique role, strategic priorities, core functions and enabling and supporting partners. Screening process does not replace standard project management elements the City uses to verify and plan projects selecting the appropriate implementation mechanism and scope for projects. Business case development and project charters remain an important component of scoping and clarify project plans.

Screening Questions

1. Does it address one of the Climate Change Master Plan priorities or new climate related Council directions?
2. Does it address one of the following:
 - a. Directly impact corporate operations, assets, infrastructure or programs, or public health and safety?
 - b. It is within a direct, partnership or influence role of the municipality?
 - c. Does it advance the 2022-2026 term of council priorities?
3. Is it defined and ready to be considered in this funding cycle?
4. Is the City best suited to perform the proposed role in the project, (consider partnership models for implementation or delivery)?
5. Is it or could it be funded through another budget allocation, this year?

If a project does not pass the screening step, the scope or implementation plan may be reconsidered and revised to better align with these criteria.

Prioritize Projects

Projects are evaluated using a structured scoring system that balances **impact reach** and **confidence** against **effort**,

Project scoring includes:

- **Impact:** Measure of the impact of the project; emission reduction, resiliency risk mitigation and priority of foundational projects
- **Reach:** Considers equity, scalability, and co-benefits of the project
- **Effort:** Estimate of the resources needed to complete the project
- **Confidence:** Assess feasibility and, level of risk in success, impact, cost, and reach

Impact-to-Effort Score

Each project receives a base score derived from its **impact and reach-to-effort ratio**, which helps identify initiatives that offer the greatest return on investment. This ratio considers:

- **Total Impact**, which includes:
 - Direct impact -projected emission reductions, and risk mitigation outcomes
 - Compounding effects -enabling future actions or amplifying other initiatives
 - Time to results -how quickly benefits are realized
- **Reach** criteria:
 - Project has significant impacts to equity seeking groups
 - Growth opportunity (scalable or repeatable, builds capacity)
 - Significant co-benefits to other City Strategic priorities
 - Permanence of outcomes - long-lasting or irreversible benefits
- **Effort**, which includes:
 - Complexity and, implementation barriers
 - Capital Cost
 - External funding and partnership reduction to effort
 - Operational cost/savings

Confidence adjustment

Scores are adjusted downward for projects with **lower levels of confidence** in achieving targeted outcomes. This accounts for:

- Limited control over key variables
- High uncertainty in implementation or results
- Significant external dependencies or risks

Types of Impact Considered

The scoring framework recognizes a wide range of impact types support the priorities of the Climate Change Master Plan including Energy Evolution and Climate Ready Ottawa, or new Council directions, including:

- **Emission reduction potential** this includes contribution to both corporate and community emission reduction targets.
- **Foundational support** (e.g., enabling future climate actions through tools, policies, or information)
- **Resiliency and risk mitigation**, including:
 - Infrastructure and environmental resiliency
 - Public health and safety protection
 - Service continuity in the face of climate-related risks

Impact is measured against the applicable key performance criteria and targeted outcomes for the project. In order to compare projects of significantly different target outcomes and performance criteria the impact weighting is translated to a scale of minimal, low, medium, high and substantial impact.

Evaluate and refine

Once a prioritized list of projects is assembled, it undergoes a review process to ensure alignment with the program's target focus areas and overall progress reporting under the CCMP. This step verifies that the selected initiatives are addressing the right priorities and that anticipated impact outcomes are being realized.

During this phase, projects may be refined or have their scope adjusted to better meet strategic objectives. A set of practical constraints is then applied to determine which projects will proceed to implementation. These constraints include:

- **Budget availability**
- **Project timelines**, particularly for shared-cost or partner-led initiatives
- **Staff capacity and resource allocation**
- **Legislative considerations**, such as timing around elections or limitations on the number of reports that can be advanced within a given year or concurrently

This iterative evaluation ensures that the final project portfolio is both strategically sound and operationally feasible, maximizing impact while respecting organizational and external limitations.

DOCUMENT 3 - Consultation with Members of Council

The Climate Change and Resiliency Service Area has worked with members of Council to share the findings from the municipal scan and research, to gather input about the role the City could play in catalyzing community action, get feedback on a draft Prioritization Framework and guide to allocating the Climate Change Master Plan capital fund and a list of priority projects for the City to focus on until the CCMP is refreshed in 2027.

Research and work with members of Council through facilitated workshops provided the following feedback on the recommendations. Twenty-one of twenty-four Councillors attended the workshops:

City's role in Community Climate Actions

- There was unanimous support for the City to have a role in catalyzing local efforts; however, this role should focus on areas where the City has direct authority, tools, or policy levers to drive meaningful change.
- The City should seek to strengthen strategic partnerships and pursue funding opportunities with other levels of government, businesses, and community organizations.
- The City should enhance the visibility of existing climate action programs and available

- Enhancing the accessibility of existing programs through additional education and outreach was highlighted as an important step. The City can also help residents better understand how they can contribute individually to climate action.
- There is an opportunity to collaborate more closely with community partners, the private sector, and non-profit organizations to advance mitigation efforts in areas where the City has less direct involvement.

Prioritization:

- Members of Council who participated in engagement workshops, expressed overall agreement with the proposed framework criteria, rating impact and reach as the most important considerations.
- The City should use the prioritization process to focus on projects with the greatest impact and reach.
- A shift in emphasis toward building community and corporate resilience, such as protection of infrastructure and community preparedness, was also recommended.
- They also expressed a desire to allow flexibility to support community led actions, consider emerging trends, integration between departments and focus on efforts within municipal authority.

These consultations also revealed diverging views regarding the extent of the City's role in advocacy with community partners, the level of support for small-scale community projects, and which specific initiatives should be prioritized moving forward.