



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 19-055**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services  
**Resource Staff:** Julie Salter-Keane, Community Projects Manager  
**Date of Meeting:** February 19, 2019  
**Subject:** Participation in Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

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**Executive Summary:**

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) is an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to a low emission, resilient society. The GCoM merges the Compact of Mayors and the EU based Covenant of Mayors with 7,445 cities around the world having committed to date.

This program benefits the Corporation and the community by promoting City-initiated energy and environmental projects and raising the profile of the City as leaders in environmental sustainability. In exchange, the City receives valuable information from other municipalities around the world on new and innovative environmental initiatives that can be adopted by the City. The City has recently received an invitation to join the GCoM.

**Key Findings**

- The City of Kingston would join over thirty-nine other Canadian municipalities in this internationally recognized environmental program;
- Committing to the initiatives adopted by program directorates would not be onerous for the City as the municipality has already fulfilled almost all of the requirements through various municipal projects and plans;
- Cities or local governments wishing to formalize a commitment to the GCoM must submit a commitment letter signed by an appropriately mandated official (i.e. Mayor, City Council);
- In becoming a member of the GCoM, Council will pledge to publicly report on the

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following within the next three years:

- i) The greenhouse gas emissions inventory for our City, consistent with the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC), within one year or less;
- ii) The climate hazards faced by our City, within one year or less;
- iii) Our target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, within two years or less;
- iv) The climate vulnerabilities faced by our city, within two years or less; and
- v) Our plans to address climate change mitigation and adaptation within three years or less.

Several of these requirements related to GHG emission inventories and mitigation planning are already within City of Kingston work plans.

**Recommendation:**

**That** the Mayor be authorized to sign and submit the Letter of Commitment to participate on the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy; and

**That** Council direct staff to provide an annual report on the City's commitments to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

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**Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner,  
Community Services**

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**Lanie Hurdle, Acting Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Deanne Roberge, Acting Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required

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**Options/Discussion:**

The GCoM, formerly the Compact of Mayors, is a United Nations program for cities to show commitment to taking action on climate change. The GCoM establishes an international platform to show cities' collective action on climate change with standardized and consistent reporting.

January 2017 marked the official launch of the GCoM, bringing together the EU Covenant of Mayors (comprising European municipalities) and the Global Compact of Mayors. To date, thirty-nine (39) Canadian cities have joined the GCoM including Caledon, Halton Hills, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Oakville, Ottawa, Guelph, St. Catharines, Thunder Bay, Guelph and Windsor.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GCoM on June 4, 2017, supporting Canadian municipalities in their drive to address the challenges of climate change. Additional information regarding the GCoM is available at <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-11-27-GCoM-FAQ.pdf>.

Through the City's participation in the GCoM, the City can advance its initiatives internationally in environmental sustainability. In addition to helping to reduce GHG emissions, adapt to climate change, and ensure access to clean and affordable energy, this program can serve numerous other benefits to the community. In exchange, the City would gain new insights from other international municipalities related to innovative technologies and best practices for improving the health and quality of life for residents. The Mayor's participation in the GCoM would provide consistent representation in the process both at the staff and political levels, as well as expand the City's visibility in energy planning.

The City has been actively engaged with the national environmental community. In February 2018, staff attended the FCM's Sustainable Communities Conference to profile Kingston's accomplishments in environmental sustainability and energy initiatives and to accept an award for the Transit High School Bus Pass Project in the transportation category of FCM's Sustainable Communities Awards.

Since 2004, the City of Kingston has also been a partner in the FCMs' Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program – a five milestone program that enables Canadian municipalities to pledge a commitment to help protect the climate and follow a common process for achieving positive action.

As participants of this program, the City has committed to establish a plan and meet the PCP's five-milestone framework – a proven municipal strategy to cut GHG emissions and reduce energy consumption. In 2017, with the completion and initiation of implementation plans for both the community and Corporate Climate Action Plans (Milestone 4) and reporting out of updated GHG emission inventories (Milestone 5), the City of Kingston was recognized by the FCM as one of twenty three (23) Canadian municipalities to have completed the 5 milestone program since 2013.

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**The Benefits and Opportunities for Participating in the GCoM**

The GCoM seeks to integrate actions from different sectors by exploiting the opportunities of new technologies in order to achieve models of development that are smart, sustainable and inclusive. The program adopts a multi-stakeholder approach, involving not only the key public sectors but also those from the private sector that can help to deliver the know-how and investment required to create, or re-create, the sustainable city. This can further benefit municipalities by helping them to obtain the support they need in developing innovative business models for financing local action.

The GCoM membership provides access to valuable comparative data with Canadian and international sources and seeks to bring cities together in order to link-up and share solutions to common problems. The information gathered encourages research by academia and others on the role of cities and local governments in the transition to a low-carbon and resilient economy.

**Commitment to the Vision of GCoM**

Cities or local governments wishing to formalize a commitment to the GCoM must submit a commitment letter signed by an appropriately mandated official (i.e. Mayor, City Council). This pledge would confirm the City’s commitment to meet GHG emission targets.

These ambitious, locally relevant solutions would be captured through strategic action plans that are registered, implemented and monitored, and publicly available. Committed cities will be required to submit an action plan within two years (no more than three) of their initial commitment that would include the following:

1. Established targets covering the City’s territory for GHG emissions reductions:
  - These targets are to be at least as ambitious, and preferably more ambitious, than Canada’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.
2. Sets out how the City intends to implement the commitments on climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience and/or access to sustainable energy.

**Covenant Commitments Currently Achieved**

Through various sustainability and energy initiatives, the City has accomplished or is in the process of completing the six pledges outlined in the commitment document.

Item	Covenant Commitment	Kingston’s Status
#1	A community-scale GHG emission inventory.	Kingston has completed community GHG emission inventories for the following years: 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2001, 2014, 2015 and 2017.

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Item	Covenant Commitment	Kingston's Status
#2	An assessment of climate and hazards and vulnerabilities.	As part of Kingston's 2014 Climate Action Plan (KCAP), future climate scenarios were modeled using the UN IPCC AR5 model. These local scenarios were used to identify adverse future weather conditions which were used to identify, at a broad level, related hazards and vulnerabilities. A detailed assessment of climate risk and adaptation strategies will be required to enhance the cursory adaptation approach within the KCAP.
#3	Ambitious, measurable and time-bound target(s) to reduce/limit GHG emissions.	Kingston's current targets for GHG reduction are: 15% below year 2000 levels by 2020 and 30% by 2030. Estimates for 2017 emissions indicate a reduction of total GHGs from the entire Kingston community of 32% between 2011 and 2017, exceeding the 15% reduction target for 2020 and the 30% target for 2030.
#4	Ambitious adaptation vision and goals, based on quantified scientific evidence when possible, to increase local resilience to climate change.	The climate modeling completed in 2014 can be used as a basis for a more rigorous assessment of climate change vulnerabilities and development of adaptation vision, goals and objectives.
#5	Ambitious and just goal to improve access to sustainable energy.	Kingston City Council recently adopted a Municipal Energy Study that identified strategic energy objectives that include, among other things, localizing more of our energy production and distribution, and increasing local energy literacy. Both of these initiatives will enable access to more sustainable forms of energy. To further these goals, Kingston is currently investing in the provision of at-cost and no-cost electric vehicle charging and the examination of its potential to generate renewable natural gas for use by existing natural gas customers of Utilities Kingston.
#6	Plan(s) to address climate change mitigation/low emission development, climate resilience and adaptation, and access to sustainable energy, including provisions for regular (annual or biennial) progress reports.	KCAP was completed in 2014 and it, along with annual updates provides actions that are underway toward increasing energy efficiency, reducing waste, increasing renewable energy generation and fuel switching to permit lower associated carbon emissions.

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Joining the GCoM is a commitment to take action on climate change, including the development of a comprehensive community climate change action plan within three years. The City will reach compliance with the GCoM within the next three years.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

In June 2015, Kingston City Council accepted the KCAP and the associated carbon reduction targets of 15% and 30% of year 2011 emission levels by 2020 and 2030 respectively.

In November 2015, the City's Corporate Management Team adopted a Corporate Climate Action Plan (CCAP) to reduce the carbon footprint of municipal operations by 8% (not inclusive of reductions in the carbon intensity of the Provincial electricity supply) below a 2011 baseline by 2020.

On January 26, 2016, City Council endorsed the inclusion of the work of cities into the language of the Paris Agreement.

**Notice Provisions:**

Not applicable

**Accessibility Considerations:**

Not applicable

**Financial Considerations:**

There are no direct or immediate financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report and there is no fee for joining the GCoM.

Budget will likely be required to undertake more detailed adaptation planning to enhance the current cursory adaptation approach within the Kingston Community Action Plan. The scope of the planning and related costs will be reviewed by staff and will be brought forward to Council as part of future annual budgeting.

**Contacts:**

Julie Salter-Keane, Community Projects Manager, Community Services 613-546-4291  
extension 1163

Paul MacLatchy, Environment Director, Real Estate & Environmental Initiatives 613-546-4291  
extension 1226

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

Not applicable

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**Exhibits Attached:**

Not applicable