

Orangeville Council endorses new Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

By Mike Baker

The Town of Orangeville has endorsed a new strategic plan designed to transform the municipality into a thriving, green, healthy and connected community.

On June 24, Orangeville Council signed off on the very first Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP). The document, more than a year in the making, outlines a precise vision centred around sustainability, environmental awareness and the economy and will help provide direction to both Council and Town Staff that will help future planning in the community.

“As a Town, Orangeville recognizes that the collective actions taken today must protect, restore and enhance the natural environment and promote a high quality of life for children, grandchildren and future generations,” said Susan Hall, Vice President and Partner at Lura Consulting, the firm tasked with the development of SNAP. “This plan has adopted a broad view of sustainability, which recognizes the many interconnected factors that impact the overall health of our environment, community and economy. This plan also recognizes the importance of a healthy environment in supporting overall health and well-being.”

The plan presents seven key sustainability themes for the Town to focus on, while outlining municipal goals and strategies for improving sustainability in each specific area. SNAP also provides metrics and benchmark data that the Town can use to measure success. Below is a recap of the seven themes and attached municipal goals.

Climate Change and Energy

Reduce emissions throughout the community, while also preparing for a changing global climate.

Corporate and Fiscal

Demonstrate municipal leadership by considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of all Town decisions.

Economic Development and Culture

Preserve Orangeville's small-town appeal, while bolstering robust businesses and tourism opportunities that support a healthy economy.

Land Use and Planning

Manage and direct land use that creates healthy, livable and safe communities.

Natural Resources and Environment

Protect and enhance the natural environment.

Social Well-being

Promote Orangeville as an engaged, inclusive community for all.

Transportation System

Encourage a reduction in the dependence of motor vehicles locally and promote all other forms of transportation.

?The plan takes a holistic approach to sustainability. It focuses on protecting our natural resources and the environment and strengthening our corporate, economic and social programs, while also planning for land use, transportation and climate change,? said Mayor Sandy Brown. ?It seems like sustainability and livability are meshed together. Municipalities that have embraced the idea move forward positively. We already have a great town, but we can build on that.?

SNAP was shaped through considerable input from community leaders, organizations, businesses and members of the public, with 583 individuals and 40 community organizations participating in the process. The plan was commissioned courtesy of a \$46,400 grant awarded to the Town by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund back in 2018.

Implementation of SNAP will be led by the Town through a Sustainability Steering Committee. This group will meet two to three times per year to establish annual priorities, discuss budgeting requirements and monitor implementation of the plan. Sustainable Orangeville will take a lead role in advocacy efforts, promotion and implementation of the plan, while the steering committee will work with Sustainable Orangeville Chair Grant Peters to ensure priority actions are aligned and complementary.

Coun. Peters was clearly happy with what he saw and heard inside Council chambers last week, commending Ms. Hall on the work put into developing SNAP. He moved to ensure the document doesn't simply ?sit on the shelf?, proposing a biennial reporting system to Council so that municipal leaders can ensure implementation of the goals outlined in SNAP. He proposed a first report come to Council in June 2021.

As an aside, Coun. Peters asked that the information included in SNAP be used and considered by Town Staff on all projects and initiatives moving forward.

?This plan will touch on all aspects of our municipality. With that in mind, I'd suggest SNAP be referenced in all staff reports moving forward,? Coun. Peters stated.

He concluded, ?The creation of a sustainability plan for our community has been a priority for Sustainable Orangeville for several years, and its implementation will improve the quality of life of Orangeville residents, now and in the future.?

For more information on SNAP, visit www.orangeville.ca/sustainability.