

Leveraging Sustainability

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Abstract

The City of Peterborough, Ontario, Canada is a single-tier municipality of 84,000. While not part of regional government, the City collaborated with Peterborough County, its eight Townships, two First Nations, and community partners, to establish Sustainable Peterborough (SP) in 2007. This unique partnership has leveraged significant external funding and influenced regional policy and planning development.

In 2009, SP secured \$445,974 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; the province; and local sources to develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. The resulting Plan was unanimously adopted by all local governments in 2012.

Its vision is simple yet far-reaching: “Caring communities balancing prosperity, well-being, and nature.” It encompasses 11 theme areas and 18 priority action items-- well beyond scope of more traditional environmental plans.

Annual report cards have spurred healthy competition among local governments, resulting in significant advances. In 2013 SP secured \$445,500 of external funding to develop a regional Climate Change Action Plan. Consultants have completed inventories of Green House Gas Emissions for 2011 and, post Paris, a broad cross section of community leaders are working on local action plans.

Sustainable Peterborough’s impact continues to expand. It has secured \$850,000 in provincial funding over three years to lead a Healthy Kids Community Challenge. The Plan has also influenced Official Plans, Transportation Plans, and Energy Plans. Collaboration has extended to the development of a regional Age Friendly Plan and a regional tourism partnership with Shimano on cycling routes. Next, Sustainable Peterborough may finally tackle local food security and agriculture ...

Introduction

This is downtown Peterborough's Main Street on July 18, 2015 where over 4,000 residents gathered for the region's first Open Streets event, Peterborough Pulse 2015. Sustainable Peterborough did not organize the event but its activities over the past decade helped create the environment for this to happen.



This paper will provide an overview of how the City of Peterborough; Peterborough County and its eight townships; Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations; and their many community partners have used Sustainability to help leverage their activities to become more livable communities.

It will profile the City and its relationship with the rest of the region. It will illustrate the evolution of Sustainable Peterborough (SP) and its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). It will provide a glimpse of how three major projects: the Climate Change Action Plan, Age-Friendly Plan, and the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, have advanced that plan and influenced other local government plans, policies, and initiatives. And perhaps most importantly, this paper will share some of the lessons learned along the way.



Peterborough Context

The City of Peterborough is located in central Southern Ontario, Canada about an hours drive northeast of Toronto. The City has a population of 84,000. It is a single tier municipality and provides a broad range of services for its residents.

The City has a reputation for its historic downtown, significant heritage buildings and structures, active trails and access to nature -- especially local waterways; a vibrant cultural community; and its rich hockey and lacrosse heritage.



There was a time when the City of Peterborough was mostly a “blue collar” town, when Canadian General Electric, Quaker Oats, and Outboard Marine Corporation were among the largest employers. According to local History Professor, Elwood Jones, “Peterborough developed a reputation from the 1950s to the 1970’s as Canada’s most typical city.” (Jones & Dyer: 1987, p. 109).

But, today, the majority of the largest employers today are public sector. The list includes: Peterborough Regional Health Centre; 2 School Boards; City of Peterborough, Trent University, Fleming College, Ministry of Natural Resources (Provincial Headquarters), and the Central East Community Access Centre. This creates a very different dynamic and economic environment. Despite the public sector’s stabilizing influence, however, the region consistently has one of the highest unemployment rates and the highest percentage of seniors population in Canada.

On the map of Peterborough County, the City is located in the bottom left hand corner. The City is a separated municipality. Although it is located within the geographic boundaries of Peterborough County, it is not part of the County Government. As the upper tier municipality, the County provides some high level coordinated services, like highways and land use planning, to its residents.

Many of the core municipal services that most affect resident’s daily lives are provided at the local township level. There are 8 townships in the County including: Asphodel-Norwood, Cavan Monaghan, Douro-Dummer, Havelock Belmont Methuen, North Kawartha, Otonabee-South Monaghan, Selwyn, and Trent Lakes.



There are some Joint Services shared between the City and County. They share Economic Development through an arms-length Corporation. The City provides regional social services, social housing, and provincial offenses, while the County provides regional ambulance service.

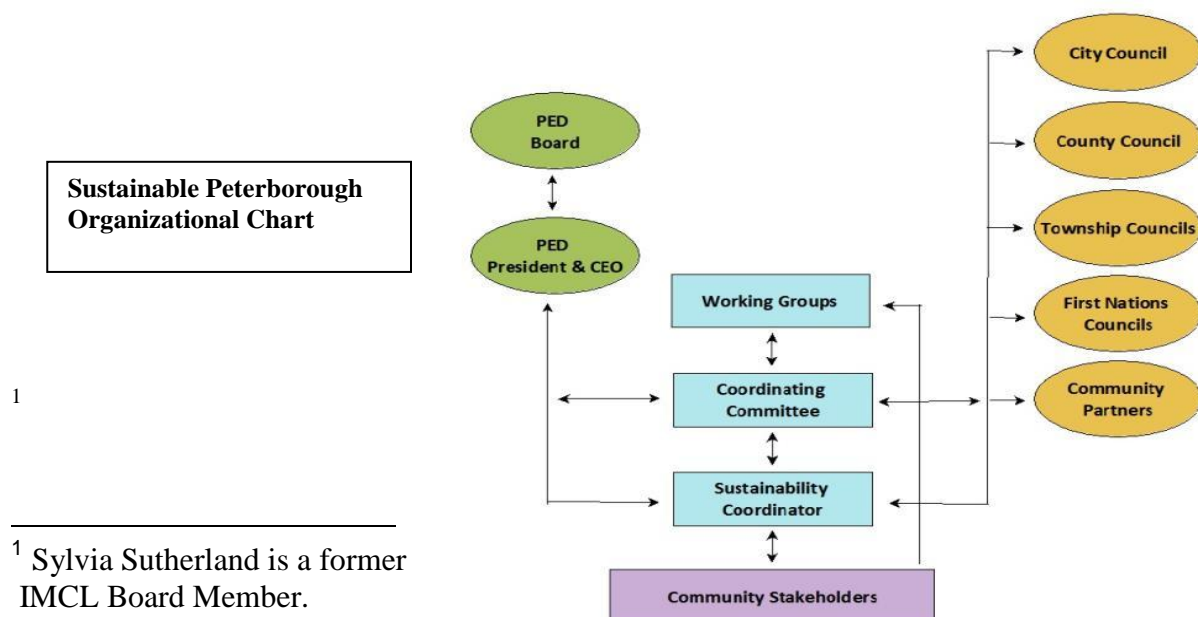
There are two other governments located within the geographic area of the County that are not part of local municipal government: the Curve Lake First Nation (middle left) and the Hiawatha First Nation (bottom left). These are both autonomous First Nations (Reserves) which provide a range of services to their band members. This is the political and geographical environment in which Sustainable Peterborough was born and has flourished.

Sustainable Peterborough

The Peterborough area has long been interested in environmental stewardship. City Mayor, Sylvia Sutherland¹, convened 2 community forums in 1989 and again in 1991 to address environmental concerns. This activity culminated in the formation of Peterborough Green-up, a longstanding environmental advocacy and service not for profit organization. It also led to Peterborough's early involvement in the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) network.

A loose knit group of concerned individuals formed the Sustainability Network in 2000 and began meeting informally. In 2007 they learned of a funding opportunity through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund and convinced both City and County Councils to support a regional sustainability planning initiative. Sustainable Peterborough was born.

Sustainable Peterborough needed a governance structure that could bring the 12 local governments together. So, the City and County decided that it would operate under the auspices of the Peterborough Economic Development Corporation, one of the Joint Services they shared. It was further decided that Sustainable Peterborough would function as a coordinating and advisory body but not as an advocacy group.



¹ Sylvia Sutherland is a former IMCL Board Member.

The Coordinating Committee currently includes representation from: the City and County of Peterborough; the Townships of Selwyn; Cavan Monaghan; and Havelock Belmont Methuen; Hiawatha First Nation; Peterborough Economic Development, Trent University, Fleming College, Green-up, Transition Town, Otonabee Region Conservation Authority; County-City Health Unit; and 2 community representatives.

Armed with \$80,000 in funding from the City as the lead Municipality, the Economic Development Corporation applied to FCM, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Rural Secretariat, and the Community Foundation to secure an additional \$365,974 to develop an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan for the region. In keeping with the FCM's requirement to use an external consultant for the process, Sustainable Peterborough engaged LURA Consulting as the firm to lead an extensive community consultation process to formulate the plan.

The resulting Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) revolves around a simple but effective Vision Statement: "Caring Communities balancing prosperity, well-being, and nature" (Lura Consulting: 2012, p. 10). The plan revolves around 11 themes, each with a specific goal statement and one or more priority actions (18 in total). Overarching values-- Education, Collaboration, Engagement, Plan Alignment, and Integration were developed to inform and transect all of the themes. The final plan, formally adopted by all 12 local governments in 2012, remains the foundation of all Sustainable Peterborough's activities to date.

The Sustainable Peterborough Coordinating Committee realized early on that it did not have the resources to work simultaneously on all 11 theme areas. So priorities have evolved as community needs and other opportunities have presented themselves. There are currently 6 working groups and over 125 community partners including local governments, institutions, not for profit organizations, small businesses, and industries working on SP projects.

The development and presentation of an annual report card to all local governments has proven to be one of the keys to Sustainable Peterborough's success. Since 2012, all partners have been encouraged to submit their accomplishments in the various theme areas. As can be imagined, the first report card was challenging in terms of getting enough information to fill. Now, there is so much happening across the region that the authors have to judiciously pick and chose what to include. There were almost 600 entries submitted for 2014 alone! All submissions, however, are available on line at SP's website:

<http://sustainablepeterborough.ca/> .



Leveraged Support

Sustainable Peterborough, through its coordinating activities and its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, has leveraged considerable community engagement and support. In the early years, the local governments could be defined as “the resigned, the reluctant, and the resistant.” (Doherty: 2010) Now all take great pride in their collective accomplishments.

The annual report cards and especially the presentations to all local governments have been invaluable. They have created healthy competition among the Townships and fostered an atmosphere of “creative swiping”. During one of such presentations in the Township of Norwood Asphodel, the Deputy Reeve commented that his daughter in the City enjoyed curbside pick up of fall leaves and branches; why couldn’t they do that? Not surprisingly, this was on their list of accomplishments in the next report card!

The way that the Project Lead, LURA Consulting, engaged the community proved to be another noteworthy accomplishment. Traditionally, consultants would organize one or more Public Information Session at various locations to get input. Usually, this attracts the advocates, the converts and the skeptics. With the “pop-up event” approach, however, the LURA team had representatives attend existing events across the region. SP had a presence at parades, concerts, farmer’s markets, and trade shows to talk with people they would not otherwise engage.

First Nation involvement has also been a critical factor. The Hiawatha First Nation became actively involved with the SP Coordinating Committee after adopting the plan in 2012. Their relationship with the neighbouring township, the County, and the City has proven beneficial for all. Hiawatha built a new LEED certified Fire hall/ Police Station/ EMS (Ambulance) Base. It also worked collaboratively with the County to construct a First Nation lodge at Lang Pioneer Village.



The ever-growing level of activity has led to increased resources. The City now has a full-time Sustainability Manager and a recognized Division to coordinate and broker sustainability initiatives across the Corporation. Sustainable Peterborough has a part-time coordinator (3 days a week) and a partner development officer (1 day a week) but plans are already underway to expand staff resources as the depth and breadth of activities continues to expand.

The cumulative success of the model and process has encouraged the Coordinating Committee to think big and go after other resources and opportunities as they present themselves.

Climate Change Action Plan

In keeping with “big picture” thinking, Sustainable Peterborough decided to take on Climate Change. Now eligible for more FCM funding through their Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program, as a result of its Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, Sustainable Peterborough applied for \$175,000 to develop a Climate Change Action Plan. SP applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for an additional \$225,000. The City of Peterborough provided the remaining \$44,500 needed. Through a competitive process to procure a lead consultant, SP was delighted to secure LURA and ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) to lead the process.

The PCP program is a network of Canadian municipal governments that have committed to reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) and to acting on climate change. Since the program's inception in 1994, over 250 municipalities have joined PCP, making a public commitment to reduce emissions. PCP membership covers all provinces and territories and accounts for more than 80 per cent of the Canadian population. (Kawalec: 2016)

PCP is the Canadian component of ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) network, which involves more than 1,100 communities worldwide. PCP is a partnership between the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability.

There are five milestones in the PCP Framework:

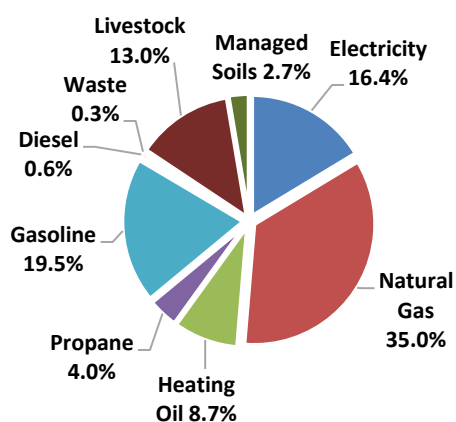
1. Establish a GHG inventory and forecast
2. Set emission reduction targets
3. Develop a local action plan
4. Implement the local action plan
5. Monitor progress and report results

In keeping with the PCP requirements, Sustainable Peterborough, through its Climate Change Coordinating Committee, began working with the consultant team to develop a corporate plan and a community plan for each participating local government. The thinking behind the corporate plan is that these are areas that the local government directly controls and can therefore influence. The focus areas include: buildings and facilities; fleet/ transportation/ corporate policy; infrastructure/ assets; and corporate waste.

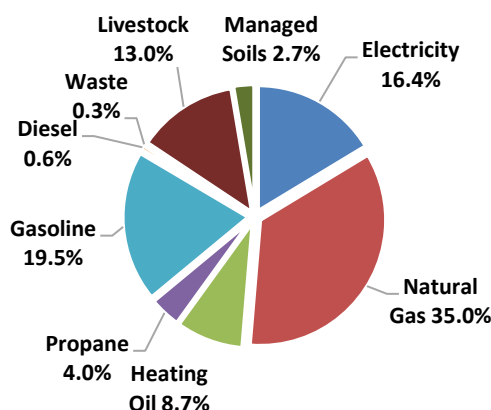
The community plan is broader. It includes the following focus areas, which also roughly correspond with Sustainable Peterborough's original 11 themes: Land Use Planning,

Transportation, Community Energy, Community Waste, Natural Assets and Water, Agriculture and Food, Economic and Business, and People and Health.

The year 2011 was selected as the base year for the background research. Data, like the illustration, was compiled for each Corporation and for each Community. This represents the regional aggregate. Of the 669,169 total tCO₂e in 2011, 42.5% came from residential use and 20% from transportation. In terms of the source emissions shown on the right hand pie chart, most of the emissions tie back to heating and electrical use. In those rural areas, where there is no access to natural gas, there is a corresponding increase in the use of heating oil and propane for residential use. Gasoline and diesel again correspond directly to the 20% sectoral emissions.



GPA Sector Emissions



GPA Source Emissions

Through the consultation process and the development of the base year data, there is demonstrable proof of the local impact of climate change and the need to reduce emissions from electricity, heating, and transportation. The Consultants and Project Teams are currently in the midst of Target setting and Action Planning. Eight community Task Forces have been formed and are meeting regularly to develop local emission targets and specific action plans. Over 100 individuals from over 70 organizations are participating in this process.

Leveraged Support

The Climate Change Action Plan has again raised the profile of Sustainable Peterborough. Curve Lake has actively engaged. Together with Hiawatha, they are Canada's inaugural First Nations to be awarded PCP's Milestone 1. They are also assuming a leadership role among the Province of Ontario's First Nations. Sustainable Peterborough is gaining peer recognition itself for its regional and rural approach. As a result of her enthusiastic leadership role on this project, the City's Sustainability Manager received the PCP's annual Spirit Award at the FCM's 2016 Sustainability Conference.

As a result of the Climate Change project, significant new partners have joined Sustainable Peterborough including the local public utility and the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce.

Most importantly, Climate Change has helped attract the attention of the largest employers in the Region, thanks to an initiative suggested by the Director of the Chamber of Commerce and implemented by the City's Mayor and the County's Warden. Both invited the largest public and private sector employers in their respective areas to a focus group on Sustainability and Climate Change. Employers were invited to share their experiences and adaptations. It quickly became apparent that many were recognized global or national leaders in their respective fields but that their accomplishments were unknown locally. As the Plant Manager at the Unimin Mine noted, "we are good at mining but not good at marketing ourselves."

To raise their local profile and to celebrate their leadership, Sustainable Peterborough has contracted the services of a retired local newspaper editor to tell their stories. He has interviewed over a dozen senior staff from these respective employers and has written a series of weekly articles highlighting their accomplishments in the local paper. It is expected that this series will continue to expand.

Healthy Communities

The next two projects, either undertaken by or influenced by Sustainable Peterborough, fall under the ICSP's theme of Healthy Communities. The goal of this theme area is "We will become a community where everyone has the opportunity and support to achieve their physical, social, mental, emotional, and spiritual potential." The main Priority Action is to "Encourage health and social services that focus on preventative care, are accessible, and meet the needs of our community as it changes." (Lura Consulting: 2012, p. 24).

Age Friendly Plan

As referenced earlier, Peterborough consistently has Canada's highest percentage of seniors in its population. Much to the City's surprise, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons' (CARP) awarded the City the highest Age-Friendly score in Canada, in 2009. This date also coincides with a growing interest in working with seniors as a special interest group to identify and address their needs. To this end, a small steering committee, inspired by local Geriatrician, Dr. Jenny Ingram, formed to organize the City's first Seniors Summit in 2009, which led to an even more ambitious program in 2011. A Seniors Planning Table formed as an outcome to better identify and coordinate a range of seniors' services and programming. Since 2013, the former one day event has evolved into an annual month long series of events and programs.

There were also two significant advancements in the following year. The Seniors Planning Table became more formalized as the Peterborough Council on Aging. Trent University established the Trent Centre for Aging and Society. Both developments spurred interest in the development of an Age-Friendly Plan for the region.

A Steering Committee applied to the Province of Ontario's Trillium Foundation for \$175,000 over 3 years to develop an Age-Friendly Plan. The funding would allow for the hiring of a Project Coordinator, under the auspices of one of the eligible Townships, Trent Lakes, to lead the process and develop the plan. It was decided that the plan would follow the World Health Organization's 8 theme areas: Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social



Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Community Support and Health Services, and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.

The Community Consultation phase has been completed. The impressive level of community engagement includes: 1084 surveys; 24 focus groups; 4 specific focus groups on Housing, Transportation, Outdoor Spaces & Buildings, and Community Support and Health Services; 4 service provider meetings; Peterborough Regional Health Centre Caregiver Interviews; 8 township community meetings; and over 20 Council presentations.

The following table summarizes some of the key findings in terms of what is working well across the region and what needs improvement. (Cullingham: 2016, pp.7-20)

Working Well	Needs Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Support Providers• Medical Clinics & Health teams• Regional Hospital• Regional trails• Sense of Inclusion• Retirement living housing options (range)• Parks & green space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respite care• Rural service access• fewer Family Doctors• Rural Transportation• Snow removal• Road/Sidewalk Maintenance• Inter-generational relations• Affordable housing• Age-in place supports

Development of the final plan is well underway. Organizers expect to begin presenting the draft plan to the various local government Councils in the fall of 2016.

Leveraged Support

The focus on seniors and the subsequent launch of the Age Friendly Plan has led to many accomplishments. Shortly after the first steering committee formed to begin planning for the first seniors' Summit in 2009, City staff in the Social Services and Recreation Divisions joined forces to create a Seniors Website connected to the City's Home Page:

<http://peterborough.ca/living/seniors.htm> . Over time, the fledgling Steering Committee evolved first into a Seniors Planning Table but eventually into the Peterborough Council on Aging. Its mission is to “influence local and regional decisions regarding the issues facing older adults and our aging communities.” (Kawalec: 2015, p. 6)

Several other local initiatives increased the focus on Senior's issues. The local Workforce Development Board initiated an Aging Workforce Research Pilot Project in 2011. The daylong Seniors Summit morphed into an annual Seniors Month across the region. To further raise awareness, the Council on Aging commissioned a local marketing firm, BrandHealth, to develop an advertising campaign to combat “ageism”. Their campaign on “Best Before” dates won 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place honours at the Clio Healthcare Advertising Awards in 2014. This effective “tongue in cheek” video can be viewed at <http://www.yourbestbeforedate.ca> .

The project generated several other significant outcomes. A fulltime Project Coordinator position was created, with the intention of it becoming a permanent resource. Trent University created the Trent Centre for Aging and Society in 2014 to focus research activity in this area. Potential baseline mapping and development of other metrics is exciting. Last but by no means least, this project finally engaged the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, the region's largest employer.

Healthy Kids Community Challenge

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is the second local project to help leverage the concept of Sustainability within the Healthy Community's theme area. This pilot project was initiated in 2013 by the Province of Ontario to counteract decreased physical activity, consumption of fruits and vegetables, and sleep; and increased sugar consumption for children 0-12 years of age.

The province set aside \$30 million over 3 years and encouraged applications. As a result of Report CSSS14-002, dated February 18, 2014, City Council, as the lead applicant, approved the submission of a regional application under the auspices of Sustainable Peterborough. The submission was eventually approved as 1 of 45 pilot projects across the province and was awarded \$825,000 over 3 years. A Working Group under Sustainable Peterborough was formed to guide the project. The City Mayor, County Warden, and First Nations representatives agreed to champion the project.



Still in the early stages, the Steering Committee has completed a community profile and has promoted and undertaken a broad range of events and activities across the region in support of the Province's first theme, **Run, Jump, Play ... Every Day**. Planning is underway for the second theme with a Healthy Eating focus.

Leveraged Support

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge has leveraged numerous accomplishments. It has led to the development of a Children and Youth component on the region's Community Services Map: http://peterborough.ca/living/City_Services/Social_Services/Community_Social_Plan/Community_Services_Map.htm. A Project Coordinator has been hired and it is hoped that this unique position can be maintained.

Perhaps most importantly, this project has brought several new major players to the Sustainability Table. All Regional Schools Boards are now engaged. Child Care Agencies across the region engaged. And, the Recreation Sector has joined the project including: Access to Recreation Group (City, Health Unit, and local Township Recreation Service Providers) and both the YMCA and YWCA organizations.

Influencing Other Plans, Policies, and Projects

Since its inception, Sustainable Peterborough has inspired and influenced a broad range of plans, policies, and projects within and among local governments across the region. The following table is by no means a comprehensive list.

County/ Townships/ First Nations	City
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selwyn Report Card• County Active Transportation Master Plan• Shimano Bike Routes• Street Light Conversions• Lang Pioneer Village First Nation Project• Peterborough's Environmental Framework for Children & Youth• The Future of Food and Farming Summits 2012, 2013, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban Forest Strategic Plan• Municipal Cultural Plan• Plan It Peterborough• Transportation Plan 2012• Energy Plan• Housing & Homelessness Plan• Vision 2025• Corporate Strategic Plan

Sustainable Peterborough's success in leveraging external funding and bringing key decision-makers together on timely issues has raised expectations about what it may tackle next. The Agriculture and Food group has been patient thus far but will be looking for opportunities relating to Urban Agricultural Best Practices, preservation of farm land, Best Practices in Local Food Guide, and Food Security Issues. The Water Working Group formed recently and is still determining its priorities. No doubt, the City's Social Services Division's plans to undertake a Community Wellness study in the fall of 2016 as a reconsideration of the Municipal Social Plan, will quickly gain traction.



Lessons Learned

Members of the SP Coordinating Committee, Community Partners and local politicians have shared their thoughts about key lesson learned during Sustainable Peterborough journey so far:

- Find Partners you can work with; make the others jealous
- Use Report Cards and appropriate metrics; present to Councils; and encourage healthy competition
- Build relationships through communication, trust, and mutual respect
- Be a catalyst! Coordinate but not advocate
- Keep breaking down the silos: involve, engage, integrate
- Align Plans!
- Use "Pop-up" style engagement; Go to the people
- Hire staff Project Coordinators whenever possible
- Move away from isolated projects to programs
- Draw from community expertise

- Be Inclusive; involve: First Nations, Youth, Seniors ...
- Shared vision = Pride
- Don't create a new bureaucracy; create an environment where organizations can work together towards a shared set of goals
- The journey is often more important than the destination
- Small groups focused on specific projects can make great strides; share the workload

Before Sustainable Peterborough, the City of Peterborough saw itself as a "Livable City". But now collectively we enjoy a region of Livable Communities!

Conclusion

Earlier this year Chief Phyllis Williams, from the Curve Lake First Nation, was invited to offer a prayer and greeting at Sustainable Peterborough's inaugural Partnership Awards night. She inspired those assembled, when she quoted a First Nation Elder, Grandmother Josephine Mandamin. Known as Water Walker, she has walked 17,000 km around all five of North America's Great Lakes, the length of the St. Lawrence River, and smaller lakes and rivers with a pail of water to raise awareness about changing water quality. She said:

"It is up to us to change it for the good... there is always hope that together we can change things around."

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