

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, October 15, 2021
Subject	Cities Race to Zero

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the Cities Race to Zero campaign and how it relates to the City of Guelph.

Key Findings

The Cities Race to Zero is a global campaign designed to gather leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, and investors to reduce global carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Over 700 Canadian and international cities and regions have joined the Cities Race to Zero campaign, and the City of Guelph is a designated member based on our existing climate change mitigation initiatives.

The City's climate mitigation goals are well-aligned with the commitments set out in the Cities Race to Zero campaign. However, a gap exists with the City not having corporate or community interim targets which reflect a fair share of the 50 per cent global reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030.

The Cities Race to Zero methodology proposes fair share interim targets as follows:

- reduce community per capita and corporate per capita GHG emissions by 63 per cent from 2018 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050.

Financial Implications

The approved capital budget for the City's 100RE work has been fully committed to date. Other approved capital budget has also been leveraged to invest in strategic energy conservation and GHG emissions reduction projects and initiatives. The 100RE work has reduced utility operating costs and limited exposure to escalating utility rates and federal carbon pricing. In addition, the 100RE work has resulted in good progress towards the corporate 100 percent renewable energy (100RE) target and supporting the community net zero carbon (NZC) target. Limited resources present challenges in meeting the corporate and community targets. Also, large capital projects and retrofits are aligned with asset management planning and dictate how quickly select energy projects can be strategically executed. Advancing targets to meet the Cities Race to Zero commitments will require additional funding for human resources, operational enhancements and capital upgrades.

Report

Cities Race to Zero campaign background

The Cities Race to Zero is a global campaign designed to gather leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, and investors to reduce global carbon emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The campaign’s objective is to build momentum around reducing carbon emissions ahead of COP26 (the United Nations Climate Change conference scheduled for November 1 to November 12, 2021) and signal to higher levels of government that cities, regions, businesses, and investors are together in meeting the Paris climate change goals. Cities interested in joining the Cities Race to Zero Campaign complete a pledge form that includes climate change commitments. Guelph’s commitments are detailed in later sections of this report.

Cities Race to Zero and the City of Guelph

The City of Guelph is [a designated member](#) of the Cities Race to Zero campaign. Guelph was designated as a member by ICLEI global based on the City’s existing commitment to a 100 per cent renewable energy transition, commitment to carbon neutrality, and acknowledgment of the climate crisis. As Guelph is already a member, we’re not required to sign the pledge.

City of Guelph alignment to Cities Race to Zero requirements

There is significant alignment between the City of Guelph’s climate change targets and actions and the Cities Race to Zero requirements.

Cities Race to Zero Requirements	City of Guelph Climate Change Initiatives and Actions	Alignment
<p>1. Publicly endorse the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize the global climate emergency.• Commit to keeping global heating below the 1.5 degree Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.• Commit to putting inclusive climate action at the center of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.• Invite partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join in recognizing the global climate emergency and help deliver on science-based action to overcome it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City of Guelph acknowledges the climate crisis.• Through corporate and community energy and climate change targets, the City of Guelph is committed to meeting the Paris Agreement targets.• Inclusive climate action is embedded throughout the City’s Strategic Plan.	Aligned

Cities Race to Zero Requirements	City of Guelph Climate Change Initiatives and Actions	Alignment
<p>2. Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City has set a corporate target of 100 per cent Renewable Energy (100RE) by 2050 and the community target is Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2050; these targets are consistent with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degree Celsius. 	<p>Aligned</p>
<p>3. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short- to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50 per cent global reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degree Celsius.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short- to medium-term steps are listed in the annual environmental sustainability report. Interim targets which reflect a fair share of the 50 per cent global reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 have not been set. 	<p>Gap</p>

Cities Race to Zero Requirements	City of Guelph Climate Change Initiatives and Actions	Alignment
<p>4. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action (as listed by the Cities Race to Zero campaign) that will help to place the city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5 degree Celsius objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City has planned or initiated several inclusive and equitable climate actions that are listed by the Cities Race to Zero campaign including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting spatial or disaggregated data to inform the design and/or monitor the implementation of climate actions. • Pilot testing and procuring, zero emissions buses by 2025. • Phasing out the disposal of organic materials in landfill and incinerators. • Ensuring all operating and closed landfills have landfill gas capture and at least flaring (ideally local landfill gas utilization for power generation) by 2025. 	<p>Aligned</p>
<p>5. Report progress annually, beginning no later than 2022 to a recognized reporting platform. Targets and action commitments should be shared through the regular channels of reporting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual progress reporting is currently submitted to the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. This is a Cities Race to Zero eligible reporting platform. 	<p>Aligned</p>

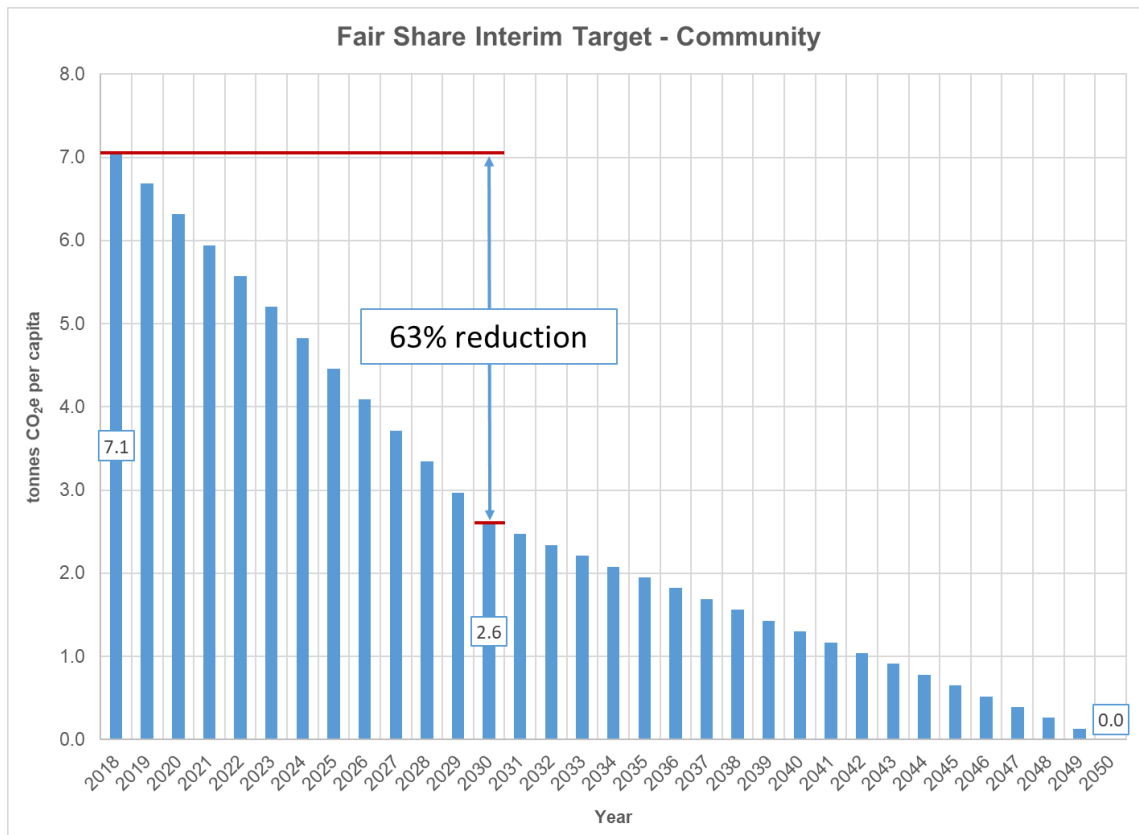
Fair-share interim targets

Guelph is well-aligned with the Cities Race to Zero campaign and meets all requirements with the exception of interim targets (corporate or community). The Cities Race to Zero campaign provides guidance on setting a science-based target in line with delivering a fair share of the 50 per cent global reduction by 2030 and reaching net zero carbon by 2050, consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius.

Community fair-share interim target

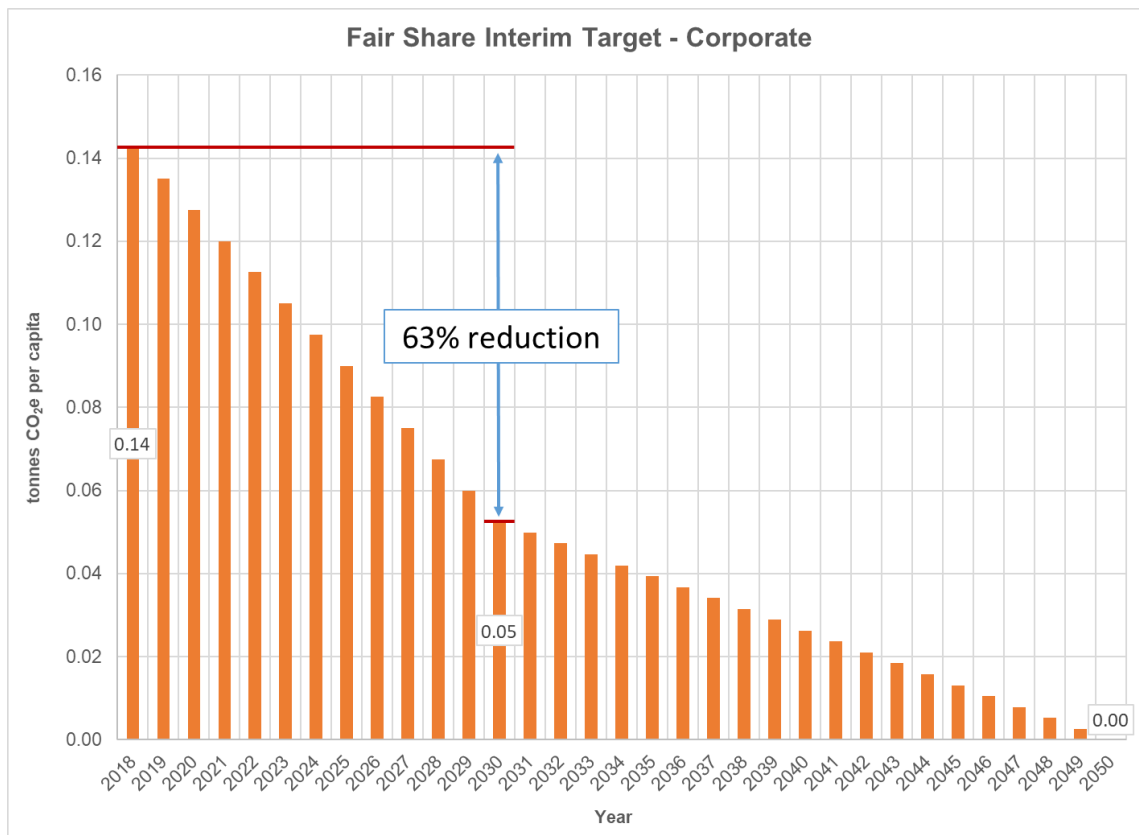
When determining the City of Guelph’s fair share interim targets, historical emissions of industrialized countries and socio-economic development are considered. Based on the science-based climate target methodologies of the Cities Race to Zero, and factoring in gross domestic product (GDP) and human development index (HDI) scores, Guelph’s community fair-share interim target is to

reduce community per capita GHG emissions by 63 per cent from 2018 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050.



Corporate fair-share interim target

Although energy conservation and GHG emissions reduction is the foundation of achieving the corporate 100RE target, the City’s corporate target indicators do not directly translate to GHG emissions as required for the Cities Race to Zero campaign. Corporate GHG emissions are tracked, and the City can adopt a parallel target to reduce corporate per capita GHG emissions by 63 per cent from 2018 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050.



Financial Implications

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Consultations

Finance

Strategy, Innovation and Intergovernmental Services

Strategic Plan Alignment

The Cities Race to Zero campaign supports the Sustaining our Future pillar of Guelph. Future Ready through the commitment to reaching Guelph’s corporate and community energy and climate change targets.

Attachments

None

Departmental Approval

None

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