Thinking Green!

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Our Town, Our Future

Summer 2009
www.eastgwillimbury.ca
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Located between downtown Toronto and the tranquility of cottage country, East Gwillimbury offers residents a fully balanced lifestyle. The Town consists of a number of communities including Holland Landing-River Drive Park, Sharon, Queensville and Mount Albert, each with their own rich history, unique charms and opportunities. Farms, forests, countryside and recreational areas add to the overall pastoral character of the Town, linking these communities together. East Gwillimbury’s location makes our Town an ideal location for businesses and a wonderful place to live.

East Gwillimbury will be experiencing significant growth within the next several years in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan.

This growth will considerably increase the Town’s current population of 23,000 to over 100,000 in the next few decades.

Sustainability is a consistent focus for the Town as it grows. The Town’s vision is to create complete communities based on a sustainable natural environment, healthy communities, and economic vitality.

The ‘Thinking Green’ Sustainability Strategy is a comprehensive program based on the triple-bottom line of the economy, the natural environment and social sustainability.
Message from the Mayor and Council

Dear Resident,

Welcome to East Gwillimbury’s Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy. We are proud to present a consolidated strategy of the Town’s award-winning Thinking Green! program.

The Sustainability Strategy is structured on four themes including sustainable development, municipal operations and practices, natural environment, and energy conservation. The approach is predicated on East Gwillimbury’s overall commitment to protect the environment, enhance economic prosperity and improve the health and lifestyle of our community.

It is important that the community we shape today is built on the sound principles and policies within this document to ensure that East Gwillimbury remains a great place to live, work, play and, most importantly, raise a family.

Thank you for taking the time to read the East Gwillimbury’s Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy. As always, we welcome your input - please contact the Town office to share your ideas.

Jamie Young,
Mayor

Councillor Marlene Johnston  Councillor Cathy Morton
Councillor Jack Hauseman  Councillor Virginia Hackson
The Town of East Gwillimbury has embarked on the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy to establish a future direction for the environmental initiatives and programs for the community. Developing the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy has been a key initiative for Council. It establishes the framework for all projects and plans to be undertaken by the Town’s environmental movement.

The Town of East Gwillimbury’s Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy is comprised of four main areas:

- **Sustainable Development**
- **Energy Conservation**
- **Municipal Operations**
- **Natural Environment**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Breakdown of Thinking Green Sustainability Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To provide policies, requirements and guidelines that will ensure growth and development occurs in a sustainable fashion now and in the future. These policies will continue to grow and be built upon to create advanced communities that exemplify good planning and environmental initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal Operation &amp; Practices</strong></td>
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<td>To provide environmentally sustainable programs and initiatives that will protect and enhance the natural environment and promote resource conservation. Almost every aspect of the Town’s municipal responsibilities will be affected by the <em>Thinking Green!</em> Strategy; from hybrid vehicles and light sensors in municipal buildings, to reducing road salt.</td>
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<td><strong>Natural Environment</strong></td>
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<td>To protect the natural environment by preserving areas of significance, such as forests, wetlands and watercourses. It is important to connect people to the natural areas that surround them, which can be achieved by promoting trail systems and other outdoor recreation areas.</td>
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<td><strong>Energy Conservation</strong></td>
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<td>To reduce energy consumption and waste through improving policies and technology. Energy conservation can occur in the Town through municipal operations, new developments, as well as through programs and tips to encourage energy conservation by residents.</td>
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The sustainable development aspect of the *Thinking Green!* Strategy will provide direction for East Gwillimbury’s continually expanding communities. To ensure the Town’s policies are both innovative and achievable, Dillon Consulting has been retained to help the Town develop sustainable development policies. This work is intended to establish sustainable policy work based on the three principles of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

**LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)**

The Town adopted a municipal policy directing all new Town facilities, industrial, commercial, institutional and multi-unit residential buildings to be built to LEED® standards. This policy was modified in October 2007; based on an implementation strategy with a scaled approach based on building size.

Benefits of LEED include reduced energy costs; reduced water usage; reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; and lower operating and maintenance costs.

The Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) is currently researching and developing LEED systems such as LEED Complete and LEED for Homes that would be applicable to existing buildings and neighbourhood development.

**Energy Star®**

The Town has adopted a comprehensive policy requiring that all new residential development subject to either Site Plan or Subdivision approval under Sections 41 or 50 of the Planning Act, be built to energy standards to satisfy the requirement for Energy Star® accreditation.

Energy Star® qualified homes are approximately 30% to 40% more energy efficient than those built to minimum Ontario Building Code standards. 17% of the energy consumed in Canada is used to run our homes. Every time we use energy from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, we produce GHG emissions that contribute to climate change. An Energy Star® qualified new home reduces GHG emissions by approximately three tonnes per year.
Sustainable Development Evaluation System (SDES)

The Sustainable Development Evaluation System is an important tool that developers will follow when planning a site and Town staff will follow when evaluating applications. Staff will be able to test and document each new development to ensure that it has fully considered innovation in sustainable design. Through the use of an evaluation system for new developments, the Town aims to improve individual and social well-being, enhance and protect the environment and achieve economic feasibility and returns.

More than 20 sustainable elements have been grouped around 5 themes in the evaluation system: Complete, Safe, Diverse Communities; Active Transportation and Mobility; Energy Efficiency and Built Environment; Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement; and Sustainable Economy. In addition to specific elements, the system also allows for innovation in all areas to provide credit for new ideas.

Existing Buildings

Through education and awareness, the Town will improve existing residential energy efficiency by supporting and promoting the ecoENERGY Retrofit program, which provides financial support and information for energy efficiency improvements and retrofits in homes, as well as small buildings and industries. The ecoENERGY Retrofit program is a federal initiative that is currently being implemented.

Sustainable Development Policies

The recent amendments to the Planning Act under Bill 51 enhance the municipality’s powers and authority in terms of sustainable building design. The Town’s Official Plan Review has allowed the Town to entrench sustainable development policies (i.e. Energy Star®) into the Official Plan and establish a comprehensive set of urban design standards and policies.

Water Wise Pilot Project

The Town has started a Water/Wastewater Conservation Program working with XCG Consultants Ltd, York Region and the development community. The program will enable the Town to maximize the use of existing and new water infrastructure and assist in creating a more sustainable community.

Twelve participants will be selected through a lottery process and will receive a number of new water-efficient fixtures and appliances free of charge and must participate in a monitoring program for a minimum of 3 years. The monitoring process will quantify potential water savings associated with installing new water-efficient fixtures and appliances in new homes.
Municipal Operations & Practices

The Town of East Gwillimbury exemplifies ‘Thinking Green’ policies in its day to day operations. It is considered a priority by Council and is ingrained into employee work ethics. The following include many of the Town’s environmentally friendly work practices.

Energy Initiatives Program

As a key initiative of the Strategic Plan, Council directed staff to implement an Energy Initiatives Strategy in 2006 to ensure that East Gwillimbury is at the forefront of sustainable, safe and environmentally conscious energy provision for its residents and businesses. The Energy Request for Information (RFI) team recommended three proponents under a three tier implementation plan (innovation, generation and conservation).

Under conservation, East Gwillimbury partnered with Honeywell Limited in 2007, to identify and optimize efficiencies in utility management, operational efficiencies and facility renewal for municipal buildings. This partnership consisted of Honeywell conducting an audit on municipal facilities and identifying retrofits to make municipal buildings more energy efficient. Honeywell commended the Town for its pro-active and progressive approach to the management and maintenance of facilities and because the Town has maintained low utility costs through energy efficiency measures already implemented, Honeywell recommended that major retrofits or actions were not necessary at this time.

Under generation and innovation, the Town worked with proponents to look into alternative energy sources (i.e. solar, wind), in order to explore opportunities to providing power to sustain our growing communities.

Fleet

The Town currently has two hybrid pick-up trucks and a hybrid car, as part of its growing fleet.

Fleet operations will be reviewing the usage of alternative fuels, such as ethanol, biofuel or natural gas for heavy-duty vehicles.

ecoENERGY Grant Seminar

The Town hosted a free seminar to help residents make sense of ecoENERGY grants available to homeowners. The seminar encouraged residents to have a home energy audit conducted on their home which would outline possible improvements to complete that would, as a result, reduce home energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Town-Wide Litter Clean Up

The Town has officially designated the 4th weekend of April to host the annual Town-Wide Litter Clean Up Event, to coincide with international Earth Day activities. In 2007, East Gwillimbury residents, community groups, service clubs, schools and businesses participated in the first annual Town-Wide Litter Clean-Up Event.
Parks & Facilities Waste & Recycling Program

Blue box containers are located at all staffed facilities; however, to enhance the Town’s recycling program, the Town has coordinated the placement of additional blue boxes in remaining unstaffed facilities. The Town has also placed recycling containers in all Town parks to allow the public to place waste and recycling products in the appropriate containers and to help reduce litter Town-wide.

Mercury Switches

The Town amended the Town’s Salvage Yard By-law in April 2007 to require auto recyclers in the Town to remove the mercury switches associated with convenience lighting prior to sending the vehicle remains off site for shredding and melting.

The new By-law requires local recyclers to remove and dispose of the mercury switches associated with convenience lighting in accordance with the guide established by the Clean Air Foundation entitled “Switch Out Auto Dismantler’s Guide to Mercury Switch Collection”.

This guide informs the recyclers of the location of the switches, make and models that are likely to have mercury switches, method of collection and method of disposal.

To advance this initiative, East Gwillimbury consulted with stakeholders and determined convenience mercury switches are generally being voluntarily removed by our local recyclers.

Earth Hour and Energy Conservation Week

The Town promotes various events such as Earth Hour and Energy Conservation week throughout the year to local residents and local businesses.

Paper Reduction

The Corporate Services Department has started a pilot program to reduce paper use at the Civic Centre and Council agendas are now being distributed electronically as an alternative to being printed and distributed in hard-copy. Town staff are also encouraged to reduce their paper use and print double-sided documents when possible.

Green Purchasing Policy

The Town is committed to green procurement practices on all day to day activities and ensures that all factors are considered before products and services are acquired. This includes the short and long term costs (economic and environmental). The Town is dedicated to life cycle choices and encourages all suppliers to deliver environmentally progressive goods. All environmentally friendly products and services will be considered superior in all procurement decisions with regards to goods and services the Town purchases.
The Town of East Gwillimbury is home to a significant amount of natural areas, from the Holland River to naturally wooded areas to trail systems that allow residents to experience the beauty of this area first-hand. In addition to the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine policies passed down from the Provincial Government, the Town has implemented the following initiatives to assist in the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Natural Heritage System

The Town retained Beacon Environmental to provide a comprehensive update to the Town’s Natural Heritage System (NHS) in terms of both mapping and a policy approach. The Town continues to work with Beacon on finalizing the policy framework and refining the mapping exercise for the NHS update. The Town will also continue to research and develop a restoration, enhancement and securement strategy to ensure that the Town balances growth with the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through its Official Plan Review.

GTA Clean Air Council

The Town is a member of the GTA Clean Air Council (CAC), participating in monthly meetings where members are educated on current environmental studies and initiatives taking place throughout the GTA. The CAC promotes the reduction of air pollution emissions and increased awareness of regional air quality issues in the GTA through the collective efforts of all levels of government.

Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS)

The LSEMS program is dedicated towards identifying and measuring sources of phosphorus entering Lake Simcoe, and to evaluate and recommend remedial measures designed to reduce these inputs and take action towards cleaning up Lake Simcoe. The Town along with all levels of government, First Nations, and local communities are working together to save Lake Simcoe by restoring a self-sustaining coldwater fishery, improving water quality, reducing phosphorus loads to Lake Simcoe, and protecting natural heritage features and functions.
Energy conservation is a very important aspect of the Thinking Green! Strategy. The Town of East Gwillimbury is committed to improving energy conservation, reducing energy waste and generally improving energy efficiency.

**Partner for Climate Protection (PCP)**

As a member of the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program, the Town is committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and addressing climate change.

The PCP program is based on a five milestone framework used to guide municipalities to reduce GHG emissions. The five milestones are:
- Create a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast;
- Set an emissions reductions target;
- Develop a local action plan;
- Implement the local action plan or a set of activities; and
- Monitor progress and report results.

**Community Energy Plan (CEP)**

The Town of East Gwillimbury is using the PCP process to develop a Community Energy Plan (CEP), in consultation with Garforth International.

The CEP would includes a range of policies, from greater densities to facilitate non-motorized transportation, the provision of employment near residential areas, greater energy efficiency for both residential and non-residential development, to the suggestion of a district energy plan which provides reliable, low-cost and efficient heating to higher density development. The intent is that the plan will not only save money in the long run, it will also keep East Gwillimbury’s carbon footprint low even as it experiences growth.

The development and implementation of both the PCP process and the CEP for the Town will continue to be updated throughout 2009.
Implementing the Thinking Green! Sustainable Strategy

Approved by Council, the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy will provide a future environmentally sustainable outlook for the organization.

The success of the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy is dependent upon three key elements:

- Continued endorsement of the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy by Council and further support and direction on environmentally sustainable programs, ideas and actions carried out in the Town of East Gwillimbury;

- The CAO and Senior Management Team and all Town employees will be responsible for continually developing plans and initiatives to help support the direction of the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy;

- Continued monitoring and reporting of the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy each year to outline environmental initiatives and appoint resources to help enhance the Thinking Green! Strategy in the future.
Your involvement in the Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy is an important aspect in improving the Town of East Gwillimbury’s sustainability efforts. In order for the Town to continue developing environmentally sustainable practices and grow as a community dedicated towards protecting the future, we ask for community involvement and any suggestions.

Want to get involved? Here are some suggestions on how to help us protect our community:

- Send us your comments or suggestions regarding East Gwillimbury’s Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy
- Visit the Town of East Gwillimbury’s website and review the environmental content as it is updated regularly
- Review the Era Banner Thinking Green! Tip of the week as it provides relevant information to help you reduce your environmental impact
- Participate in the annual East Gwillimbury Litter Clean up Event (4th weekend in April) and coinciding Earth Day activities.
- Express your environmental opinions to the Region, Province and Federal Governments

As a resident, be proactive and re-evaluate your habits to have a positive impact on our environment and community

Help clean your community, contact the Town of East Gwillimbury or the Regional offices for volunteer opportunities.

Send your Thinking Green! Sustainability Strategy comments to:

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