

# **Profile of Engagement: Input into Development of the Halton Community Climate Plan**

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**July 2023**

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## Executive Summary

The *Profile of Engagement: Input into Development of the Halton Community Climate Plan* provides an overview of the scope and breadth of community engagement activities, undertaken by the Halton Environmental Network (HEN), to support development of a Halton Community Climate Plan.

Development of a community climate plan for Halton requires consideration of opinions and viewpoints from stakeholders and voices across Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville. HEN's understanding and work in the environmental and climate arenas over the last 2 decades enabled the organization to reach out and engage with the Halton community in this endeavour.

In order to meaningfully engage with the Halton community, HEN embarked on a robust outreach program which occurred over 7 months from November 2022 to May 2023. In November 2022, HEN devised and deployed a survey to the Halton community to broadly gauge the community's understanding of and readiness to pursue climate actions. 333 members of the Halton public responded to the survey.

In 2023, HEN engaged directly with the Halton community by identifying and contacting 111 stakeholders across Halton, including conservation authorities, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations, community groups, and chambers of commerce. Special effort was made to reach out to indigenous nations, youth and the agricultural community. A youth video presentation was made to engender discussion with youth. Most of the consultation activities were virtual. Together with Halton Region staff, HEN prepared and delivered presentations to these groups to advise of the Region's intent to prepare a Community Climate Plan and to elicit their opinions and advice based on relevant expertise.

Community engagement culminated in a virtual Community Climate Summit at the end of May, in which over 100 people registered, with over half in actual attendance. The Summit was advertised in many locations ranging from Facebook Posts, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, e-mails, a project web page, HEN newsletter, and a media release, to posters placed across the region. The consultation format was engaging and included a presentation about the climate reality in Halton and opportunities to redress climate challenges, as well as the use of Mentimeter, Q and As, and Post-It Notes to capture feedback. To garner input during consultation and to provide a basis for on-going climate information in Halton, HEN prepared and included on its website the *2019 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory* and a *Climate Action Resource Guide - From Local to Global*.

## Section 1: Project Overview

Halton Region is spearheading a community climate plan for the Halton community. Given the breadth of climate understanding and environmental reach in Halton, the Region has partnered with the Halton Environmental Network (HEN) to support development of the Halton Community Climate Plan (HCCP). This work supports and advances Halton Region's participation in the [Partners for Climate Protection \(PCP\) program](#).

It was important to hear from the broad Halton community about their priority actions and their motivation and inspiration to pursue and undertake climate action. HEN prepared a Community Engagement and Outreach Plan with the ensuing objectives:

- To develop a community climate plan.
- To foster collective action and response.
- To gauge the Halton community's understanding, readiness, and willingness to commit and pursue meaningful climate action.
- To inspire the community to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and address local climate risks.
- To support local municipal climate actions, and to highlight, align, and amplify this work in our community.
- To advance the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program.

As the first plan of its kind, it was imperative to strive for outreach and engagement with as many residents, stakeholders, community groups, and youth in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville. This report profiles the community engagement activities undertaken by HEN from November 2022 to May 2023 in support of the Region's development of the Halton Community Climate Plan.

## Section 2: Engagement and Communication Methods

### Engagement Opportunities

Key engagement opportunities employed for input on the Halton Community Climate Plan development included an online survey and virtual consultation sessions. The following table summarizes the engagement opportunities and methods used to garner input and feedback from the community. Engagement activities were carried out from November 2022 to May 2023. Further details about each engagement activity are described in the table below, and in the appendices which follow.

Engagement Opportunity	Engagement Date	Engagement Methods and Tools	Metrics	Lead Organization	For further details see
Community Climate Action Plan Survey	November 21, 2022, to January 16, 2023	- Online Survey	333 respondents	HEN	Appendix G
Thomas A. Blakelock High School - Eco Night	April 20, 2023	- Community Event - Post-it notes	15 respondents	HEN	Appendix A
Consultation with the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture	April 20, 2023	- In-Person Consultation - Presentation - Post-it notes	Not available	Halton Region	Appendix D
Halton Hills Race to Net Zero	April 22, 2023	-Community Event -Post-it notes	15 respondents	HEN	Appendix A
Youth Engagement	May 4, 2023, to May 30, 2023	- Mentimeter - Video presentation	31 Mentimeter surveys	HEN	Appendix B
Conservation Authorities and Niagara Escarpment	May 15, 2023	-Virtual session -Presentation	5 participants	HEN	Appendix D

Engagement Opportunity	Engagement Date	Engagement Methods and Tools	Metrics	Lead Organization	For further details see
Commission (NEC) Consultation Session		-Mentimeter - Q&A session			
Indigenous Consultations	May 19, 2023 May 23, 2023	-2 virtual sessions	5 participants	Halton Region	Appendix C
Community groups and Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations consultation sessions	May 23, 2023 May 29, 2023	-Virtual session -Presentation -Mentimeter - Q&A session	16 participants	HEN	Appendix D
Community Climate Summit	May 30, 2023	-Virtual session -Presentation -Mentimeter - Q&A session	56 participants	HEN	Appendix E

## Online Survey

A Survey was developed by Halton Environmental Network and an external consultant, in collaboration with the Region, to determine the Halton community's understanding, readiness, and willingness to commit and pursue meaningful climate action. The online survey was conducted between November 21, 2022, and January 16, 2023.

The survey was promoted through HEN's social media and website, at 2 community events and through the distribution of cards with QR codes to the survey at GO stations in Acton, Burlington, Milton, and Oakville. The survey had a total of 333 respondents.

For a detailed summary of the survey results see Appendix G.

## **Community Events**

HEN attended two community events in April 2023: Thomas A. Blakelock High School Eco Night Event on April 20, and Halton Hills Race to Net Zero Event on April 22. Attendees were given the opportunity to provide feedback on questions related to climate actions, feedback was captured using post-it notes.

Detailed summaries for these community events can be found in Appendix A

## **Youth Engagement**

A video presentation was developed by HEN and Halton Region, in collaboration with Kayne Boyall and Suha Khan who are university students with roots in the Halton community and who have previously worked with the HEN. The 10-minute video presentation introduced the Halton Community Climate Plan and a local context for climate change, followed by a series of self-paced open-ended Mentimeter questions. The Mentimeter survey had a total of 31 respondents.

To promote youth engagement, emails were sent to Halton District School Board and Halton Catholic District School Board with a request to share the video through internal channels and to share with groups at the various schools (e.g., Civics classes, Eco clubs, Student Councils, etc.). Emails with the video and survey link were also sent out to students participating in the Generation Green program. To further promote youth uptake of the survey, TikTok and Instagram Reels were used for a youth focused social media campaign.

## **Agricultural Consultations**

The Region convened a meeting with the Halton Region Federation of Agriculture. This in-person meeting was intended to understand the perspectives of the agricultural community on climate impacts on their industry and operations. The participants were forthcoming on the challenges they face as an industry, the imperative for a better societal understanding of their industry, and the opportunities that could be pursued. Detailed proceedings of this meeting reside with the Region.

## **Indigenous Consultations**

The Region coordinated meetings with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River to facilitate discussions. The intent of these meetings was to nurture relationships with these nations on climate matters by listening to comments, thoughts, and perspectives. The Region reviewed the Indigenous Knowledge sections of the *Climate Action Resource Guide* including the Indigenous-led climate actions and Indigenous climate initiatives. Members of both the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River would like to remain involved in the Region's climate work and requested to see the draft climate plan before it is provided to Regional Council. Detailed proceedings of these meetings reside with the Region.

## **Virtual Community Consultations**

Three virtual consultation sessions with community stakeholders were held throughout May 2023 (Conservation Authorities and the Niagara Escarpment Commission held on May 15, and community groups and Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations held on May 23 and May 29). The sessions were facilitated by HEN and the consultant Glenn Pothier from GLPi.

The aim of these stakeholder sessions was to:

- Engage with the broad range of Halton stakeholders around climate change,
- Foster a greater understanding of the role of community in climate action and how we can all take action,
- Better understand preferences and appetite for acting on climate, and
- Gain feedback on what is already happening around climate action in the community and what can be done to strengthen activities.

The virtual consultation sessions featured a presentation, introducing the Halton Community Climate Plan and local context for climate change, a series of questions with input captured through Mentimeter, and a Question and Answer session. 21 participants attended the stakeholder sessions.

Detailed summaries for each community stakeholder session can be found in Appendix D.

## **Community Climate Summit**

On May 30, 2023, a virtual community climate summit was facilitated by the Halton Environmental Network (HEN) and Glenn Pothier from GLPi. The summit featured a presentation, a series of Mentimeter questions and a Question and Answer session. 56 participants attended the virtual summit.

## Stakeholders Engaged

The table below lists 111 community stakeholder groups that were contacted to participate in the consultation activities, as well as to share project engagement opportunities with their networks.

Conservation Authorities/NEC and RBG	Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations	Community Groups		Chambers of Commerce/BIAs	Governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conservation Halton</li> <li>-Credit Valley Conservation</li> <li>-Grand River Conservation Authority</li> <li>-Niagara Escarpment Commission</li> <li>-Royal Botanical Gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bay Area Climate Change Council</li> <li>-BurlingtonGreen</li> <li>-Climate Reality Canada</li> <li>-Every Action Matters Group</li> <li>-Faith and the Common Good</li> <li>-Food for Life Oakville</li> <li>-Future Energy Oakville</li> <li>-Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet</li> <li>-Green Venture</li> <li>-Halton Action for Climate Emergency Now</li> <li>-Halton Hills Climate Action</li> <li>-Oakville Climate Action</li> <li>-OakvilleGreen</li> <li>-Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources</li> <li>-Sustainable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Acton Rotary</li> <li>-Aldershot Lions Club</li> <li>-Burlington Foundation</li> <li>-Burlington Lions Club</li> <li>-Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton</li> <li>-Central Burlington Women's -PROBUS Club</li> <li>-Canadian Federation of University Women Georgetown</li> <li>-Canadian Federation of University Women Milton and district</li> <li>-Canadian Federation of University Women Oakville</li> <li>-Canadian Federation of University Women Burlington</li> <li>-Combined PROBUS Club of North Oakville</li> <li>-Community Foundation of Halton North</li> <li>-Food for Life</li> <li>-Forestview Church</li> <li>-Georgetown Lions Club</li> <li>-Halton Black Voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oakville Community Foundation</li> <li>-Oakville Lions Club</li> <li>-Oakville Trafalgar Lions Club</li> <li>-Optimist Club of Burlington</li> <li>-Optimist Club of Halton Hills</li> <li>-Optimist Club of Milton</li> <li>-Optimist Club of Oakville</li> <li>-PROBUS Club - Queen Elizabeth Park Cultural and Community Centre</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of Burlington</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of Burlington Lakeshore</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of Milton</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of North Oakville</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of Oakville</li> <li>-PROBUS Club of Old Oakville</li> <li>-PROBUS Women's Club of Burlington</li> <li>-Rotary Burlington</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Chambers of Commerce- Burlington</li> <li>-Chambers of Commerce- Halton Hills</li> <li>-Chambers of Commerce- Milton</li> <li>-Chambers of Commerce- Oakville</li> <li>-BIA - Kerr</li> <li>-BIA - Bronte Village</li> <li>-BIA - Downtown Oakville</li> <li>-BIA - Downtown Georgetown</li> <li>-BIA - Downtown Acton</li> <li>-BIA - Downtown Burlington</li> <li>-BIA - Aldershot Village</li> <li>-BIA- Downtown Milton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-City of Burlington</li> <li>-Town of Halton Hills</li> <li>-Town of Milton</li> <li>-Town of Oakville</li> <li>-Regional Council</li> <li>-Other government representatives would have received notice via social media, newsletter and other promotional channels</li> </ul>

Conservation Authorities/NEC and RBG	Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations	Community Groups		Chambers of Commerce/BIA's	Governments
	<p>Leadership            -Sustainable Milton            -Trees 4 Halton Hills            -Willow Park            -Ecology Centre</p>	<p>-Halton Equity &amp; Diversity Roundtable            -Halton Multicultural Council            -Halton Rotaract            -Interfaith Council of Halton            -Kerr Street Missions,            -Knox Oakville            -Maple Grove United Church,            -Milton Lions Club            -Milton Rotary            -Mixed PROBUS Club of Burlington            -North Burlington Women's PROBUS Club            -Oak Park Neighbourhood Center</p>	<p>Lakeshore            -Rotary Club of Acton / Rockwood            -Rotary Club of Burlington            -Rotary Club of Burlington Central            -Rotary Club of Burlington North            -Rotary Club of Georgetown            -Rotary Club of Oakville            -Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar            -Rotary Club of Oakville West            -Safe Streets Halton            -Shaarei-Beth El            -Sheridan PROBUS Club            -St. Paul's United Church            -St. Cuthbert's.            -The Anglican Church of the Incarnation            -The Appleby Women's PROBUS Club of Burlington            -The Escarpment PROBUS Club of Milton</p>		

## **Communication Methods**

The communication methods used to share project information and engagement opportunities with the community and stakeholders are described below. Further details on the communication methods can be found in Appendix F.

### **Project Webpage**

A project webpage hosted on the Halton Environmental Network (HEN) website was created to provide background information on the Halton Community Plan, and to two resource documents, *The Halton Region 2019 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory* and *The Climate Action Resource Guide: From Local to Global*.

### **Social Media**

Between November 21 2022 and May 31 2023, HEN used social media to promote community engagement opportunities and project information. Promotion included social media campaigns on the survey, community climate summit, youth engagement, and *The Climate Action Resource Guide: From Local to Global*. Social media platforms used were Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and TikTok.

### **Media Coverage**

To promote the community climate summit, press releases were sent to seven media outlets, and an article on the climate summit was published on May 22, 2023.

### **Poster Distribution**

A poster with information about the climate summit was published and distributed to libraries and local businesses throughout Halton. The posters were distributed to 25 locations.

### **Stakeholder Emails**

A total of 980 emails were sent out to stakeholders inviting them to participate in consultation sessions and to share information about the summit with their networks. Additionally information was shared through the events notice on the Halton Economic Development newsletters.

## Engagement and Reach

The table below summarizes the reach of the community engagement activities. Detailed engagement metrics can be found in Appendix F

Engagement Activity	Reach	Engagement Activity	Reach
Facebook	31 Posts 4705 reached	Posters	25 locations
Twitter	24 Posts 93,337 reached	Project Webpage on HEN Website	2115 visits
Instagram	30 posts 15,774 reached	Emails to Stakeholders	980 emails sent
Instagram Reels	1 post 263 reached	Community Groups Consultation Session	16 participants
LinkedIn	8 posts 1036 reached	Conservation Authorities, NEC Consultation Session	5 participants
TikTok	1 post 14 reached	Community Climate Summit	56 participants
HEN Newsletter	1 newsletter 1493 reached	Community Events	30 participants
Media Coverage	8 media release sent 1 article	Community Climate Action Survey	333 respondents

## Section 3: Next Steps

The Region will compile and analyse the consultation data, and use information in this report as well as other materials prepared by HEN including the foundational database, the [Halton Region 2019 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#) (April 2022), the [Climate Action Resource Guide: From Local to Global](#) (May 15, 2023), the draft *Halton Community Climate Plan Table of Contents*, and the report *Governance Framework Options for Implementing Community Climate Action in Halton*. These background documents will support the Region in preparing a report for Regional Council's consideration on potential community actions that can be included in a Community Climate Plan.

## Section 4: Summation Commentary

HEN was pleased to work with Halton Region to engage the community for the development of a Halton Community Climate Plan.

Lessons learned from the project's consultation approach are provided in the following bulleted lists. These points can be considered as the Region proceeds with detailed analysis of the Mentimeter results and inputs from consultation sessions with the agricultural and Indigenous communities.

The broad findings from the engagement sessions were:

- The Halton Community is interested in advancing community climate action, however, there is considerable variation in the understanding of what the best actions are and how to move these actions forward.
- A disparity exists between those that are well informed such as the Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS), Conservation Authorities (CAs) and Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), and the broader community at the organizational and individual levels. As an example, outreach at broader public events brought in actions such as shifting to a more meatless diet, planting gardens and trees, and biking or using a bus instead of using a car while sessions with targeted stakeholders such as ENGO's, the CAs and NEC brought forward actions to shift energy sources from fossil-fuel-based to less carbon-based sources, i.e. ground source heat pumps and solar; supporting deep home energy retrofits, and more intensified urban areas, as well as emphasizing the impact of current governmental legislative changes curtailing their organization's options to support climate planning and action. This divide in climate impact understanding and proposed

suggestions for climate action can be assessed in much greater detail through analysis of the Mentimeter data collected during the engagement period.

Lessons learned from the public consultation approaches used to engage stakeholders and the broader public include:

- There were missed opportunities to build project awareness and support by not engaging key partners in the earlier stages of the project such as having meetings with Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations to let them know about the project, greenhouse gas emission inventory work, and work on the foundational database on climate actions.
- Greater use of educational documents prepared by the team, specifically the Halton Region 2019 Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory and the Climate Action Resources Guide- From Local to Global, may have helped stir more community interest and awareness of the Region's community climate change plan. Leveraging existing networks, creating social media campaigns, newsletters and communications tools could have led to greater success.
- The timing of the community survey promoted by social media and conducted at GO Station locations between late November/December 2022 into January 2023 proved challenging. It is presumed the holiday season and weather likely resulted in the lower-than-expected responses.
- Due to constraints around the consultation period and the students' exam season, a video with embedded Mentimeter links presented by youth climate ambassadors was incorporated to access the youth voice. Timing was likely once again a contributing factor to the low uptake despite being promoted by supportive educators through internal channels in the Halton District and Halton Catholic District School Boards. A subsequent pivot to a social media campaign (TikTok, Instagram) and utilizing the over 140 Generation Green program students led to an uptake in responses although overall numbers remained low. Engaging youth to connect to youth was seen favourably by participants and this technique, as well as the use of social media as a key delivery method, should be considered for use in the future with sensitivity around school timetables. Engagement with youth would likely have been more impactful over a longer period of time and earlier in the school year.
- Overall, virtual consultation sessions were found to be an effective way to reach key stakeholders and the broad community through the targeted stakeholder-sessions and the Community Climate Summit. Constant communication with stakeholders and setting up engagement session registration sites such as Eventbrite were key to achieving the numbers of participants in this engagement. While virtual events provided access to greater numbers, in-person events with Indigenous representatives and members of the agricultural community were also highly effective and the engagement would likely have benefitted from additional in-person events.

- Registration for the summit was approximately 115 people with 56 in actual attendance. An incorrect webinar link was initially provided to registrants although efforts were made immediately to notify registrants. The impact of the incorrect webinar link on the final number of those who attended is unknown. In future, it would be supportive if the email being sent out to participants is reviewed by all parties involved in the engagement process.
- A number of extenuating factors including the introduction of provincial initiatives affecting local and Regional governments, staffing and sensitivities around other consultation processes occurring at the same time impacted the timing of the consultation efforts resulting in condensed windows of opportunity.