

# Municipal Climate Lens

## Introduction

1. Canadian municipalities must consider the climate impacts of their decisions in order to curb greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and advance climate action.
2. The climate lens is an emerging tool to operationalize climate considerations within municipal operations normalize City planning and actions, strengthening efforts to adopt proactive climate solutions.
3. Incorporating a climate lens encourages behavioural change and consideration of climate impacts into municipal policies, plans and projects to advance municipal GHG reduction and climate resilience.

## Applying a Climate Lens to Municipal Decision-making

4. Application of a climate lens implies considering climate vulnerability, climate risks, and climate-proofing to proposed or existing policies, plans or projects. A climate lens can consider both adaptation and mitigation factors.
  - **Adaptation:** How vulnerable is the measure to the impacts of climate change? Does the measure inadvertently increase vulnerability to climate change? Can the measure be adjusted to better consider the risks posed by climate change?
  - **Mitigation:** Does the measure increase GHG production above baseline? Can the measure be adjusted to reduce GHGs? Is there a more GHG intensive measure that is being avoided using the proposed measure?

5. To better incorporate a climate lens into decision-making, municipalities need critical information on local climate impacts and the associated risks that are relevant for specific decision contexts. This information can be gathered from local meteorological agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector.
6. A climate lens can be applied to various existing and new City objectives to determine synergies and combinations of objectives that can strengthen the case for specific actions, investments, and interventions.

## Benefits of Applying a Climate Lens

7. **Mainstream climate change as a municipal priority** - A simple climate lens can be applied by staff from different municipal departments to consider how potential projects or policies may be impacted by climate change (adaptation), or how they may impact climate (mitigation). Application of climate lens can help municipal staff identify and respond to the localized impacts of climate change in their communities.
8. **Demonstrate municipal leadership** - By applying a climate lens, local governments across Canada can operationalize climate considerations such as local environmental quality, building resilience, and community protection from significant climate change impacts.
9. **Increase transparency in municipal decision-making** - By applying a climate lens, municipalities can enhance public transparency and accountability around considering and addressing climate.

**10. Facilitate interdepartmental engagement -**

Municipal staff from various departments can collaborate with climate change staff while applying a climate lens to their initiatives. Application of climate lens may also serve as an opportunity to educate staff from across departments on climate mitigation and adaptation.

**11. Reduce GHGs -** A longer-term advantage of applying a climate lens to overall municipal decision-making is the reduction of GHG emissions. Municipalities can modify their plans and policies to accommodate low emission designs and decisions in their operations.**12. Increase climate resilience -** By considering climate change impacts in day-to-day governance and operations, municipalities can leverage ongoing decisions and processes as opportunities to build climate resilience.

## Municipal Climate Lens Tool

13. The [Municipal Climate Lens Tool](#) was developed by Clean Air Partnership in conjunction with over thirty Ontario municipalities. It is designed to provide a preliminary, qualitative understanding of whether a municipal decision will affect climate (through the production of GHGs) or be affected by climate (through increased exposure to temperature or precipitation).

14. This web-based, open-access survey tool is designed to be used by all municipal staff. For every decision, basic information can be entered, then a series of questions are asked relating to how the decision can affect (or be affected by) climate change.

15. The tool examines how a decision could produce scope 1 (direct emissions) and scope 2 (indirect emissions), and how it could be affected by extreme temperature and precipitation. High-level results are provided both on-screen and by email.

16. The CAP climate lens tool has now been applied to over 1000 municipal decisions.

## Municipal Implications

17. Municipalities across Canada have declared climate emergencies and a key component of these declarations is the inclusion of climate considerations in municipal decision making. Application of the climate lens in municipal decision-making provides a mechanism to analyze relationships between municipal decisions and climate change.

18. The municipal climate lens can foster multi-departmental collaboration and dialogue regarding incorporating climate change considerations into decision-making.

19. Applying a climate lens in the municipal decision-making process can accelerate climate action by mainstreaming climate policy and its integration into municipal sectors including economic development, finance, infrastructure and energy.

## Related Webinars and Further Reading

20. [Clean Air Council Municipal Climate Lens Tool Webinar](#)
21. [City of Victoria - Application and Integration of the Climate Lens](#)
22. [FCM - Integrating Climate Considerations: Governance and Operations](#)
23. [Brantford Climate Lens](#)
24. [Climate Lens Development – City of London](#)