



# Staff Report

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## Operations – Sustainability & Solid Waste

**Report To:** Council Meeting  
**Meeting Date:** December 2, 2024  
**Report Number:** CSOPS.24.088  
**Title:** Youth Climate Action Fund Update – Additional Information  
**Prepared by:** Nicholas Cloet, Sustainability Coordinator

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.24.088, entitled “Youth Climate Action Fund Update – Additional Information”.

### B. Overview

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At the November 19, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council requested additional information to support decision-making regarding the invitation to participate in Round 2 of the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF). This Staff Report outlines a preliminary budget that anticipates the allocation of staff time and expenditures necessary for implementing Round 2 of the YCAF. It also presents a strategy to balance staff allocation by prioritizing local participation while ensuring regional engagement and support from partners, along with increased support from the County and improved processes derived from the lessons learned in Round 1.

### C. Background

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The Town of The Blue Mountains is a Round 1 participant in the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) program. Staff Report [CSOPS.24.079 Youth Climate Action Fund Update](#), presented at the November 19, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, provided metrics describing youth engagement, project details, staff allocations, and expenditures for the YCAF program up to September 30, 2024. It also included projections for staff time allocations leading up to the program’s conclusion on February 28, 2025. Following this report, Council passed the following motions:

Moved by: Councillor Hope

Seconded by: Mayor Matrosovs

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.24.079, entitled “Youth Climate Action Fund Update”;

AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk are authorized to execute a Grant Agreement between the Youth Climate Action Fund as represented by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and The Corporation of The Town of The Blue Mountains to receive \$100,000 USD for administration and disbursement of funding for youth-led climate action projects, pending a review by the Town's Youth Climate Action Fund Project Team and an independent legal opinion, more specific details to ensure that Town of The Blue Mountains taxpayers receive full benefit from their investment and a budget for all committee activities in Round 2, Carried

**AND**

Moved by: Councillor Hope

Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Bordignon

THAT with respect to Staff Report CSOPS.24.079, entitled "Youth Climate Action Fund Update"; Council authorizes the Mayor to sign and submit the Youth Climate Action Fund Mayor's Pledge to the Youth Climate Action Fund program on behalf of Town Council, Carried

This staff report (CSOPS.24.088) provides detailed information regarding the expected allocation of YCAF grant funds and Town staff time required for implementing Round 2 of The Blue Mountains YCAF program. It includes a preliminary budget and a work plan outline in Attachment 1. Additionally, Attachments 2 and 3 contain the Mayor's Pledge, and the original invitation email received by the Mayor, Town CAO, and Sustainability Coordinator. These attachments are provided to assist Council in making their decision.

## **D. Analysis**

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Round 2 of The Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) would provide the Town with \$100,000 USD, with a maximum of \$15,000 USD allocated for Town expenses. These expenses may include staff time, events, communications, stipends, and professional services to facilitate the delivery of Round 2 of the YCAF program. With an exchange rate of 1.4 USD to CAD, the Town would receive approximately \$140,000 CAD, which includes around \$21,000 CAD for staff time and other expenditures, and \$119,000 CAD earmarked for microgrant allocations. This funding could support up to 18 projects, assuming all applicants request the full amount of \$5,000 USD per project.

Attachment 1 includes a preliminary budget and proposed work plan that details how the YCAF funding will be allocated to staff time and eligible program expenditures during the grant period from January to October 31, 2025, as well as staff time before and after this period. It's important to note that program timelines may shift, potentially compressing staff time and expenditures into different months than those indicated.

In developing the preliminary budget, a high level division of 80% staff time (\$12,000 USD or \$16,800 CAD) and 20% other expenditures (\$3,000 USD or \$4,200 CAD) was first established, and then a workplan was independently developed and staff time estimated on a monthly

basis. The thresholds of 80/20 were compared with the work plan allocations, and any discrepancies were identified as contingency amounts. As shown in Table 1 of Attachment 1, 280 hours of staff allocation valued at \$15,345 will be compensated by the YCAF program, with an additional YCAF-funded contingency of 27 hours valued at \$1,455. Similar to Round 1, significant event costs associated with venues or refreshments are unlikely; however, these expenses are budgeted conservatively. If staff time exceeds the work plan and contingency amounts, funds currently designated for expenditures will be used to cover the additional staff time, and events will be held at in-kind or free facilities (e.g., Town Hall) or scaled back as necessary.

The \$119,000 CAD available for microgrant allocations represents a significant opportunity to support youth-led climate action projects in The Blue Mountains and the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. This geographic area was established as eligible for the Town's YCAF program in Round 1, and maintaining this eligibility is crucial for several reasons:

- The YCAF program's invitation letter emphasizes the importance of The Blue Mountains in building relationships and implementing concrete projects within Traditional Territories and with Indigenous youth.
- As noted in Staff Report CSOPS.24.079, the Mayor has met with the joint Chiefs of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and their Manager of the Environment Office to discuss potential opportunities for Round 2. Furthermore, the Town invited a young member of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation to join the Selection Committee in Round 1, underscoring the significance of Indigenous participation and leadership.
- The Blue Mountains Future Story highlights the need to create "a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the Saugeen [Ojibway] First Nation and Indigenous peoples who reside within the Town and in our region" (page 11). The Town should continue to build on its engagement with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation in Round 2 to strengthen this vital relationship.
- High schools attended by youth from The Blue Mountains are typically located in either Meaford or Collingwood, outside the Town's boundaries. Additionally, young residents seeking post-secondary education in The Blue Mountains may rely on long-distance or virtual options, and may attend Georgian College campuses in Collingwood or Owen Sound, or they will attend a more distant post-secondary institution in person. In Round 1, post-secondary students contributed valuable ideas to The Blue Mountains and the broader region, all of whom had familial ties or lived experiences in the area. It is impractical for staff to verify the current or past residences of youth participants. Given the locations of educational institutions and the cost of living, restricting participation to youth who currently reside in The Blue Mountains would likely not benefit the Town's youth population. Engaging youth from The Blue Mountains may require including individuals who do not currently live in the Town and, for practical reasons, might include youth who have never lived there.
- With at least \$119,000 CAD available for microgrant awards, and with individual allocations of up to \$5,000 USD (\$6,500 to \$7,000 CAD, depending on the final allocation received), the program can support 17 to 18 projects. More projects may be feasible if some funding requests are smaller. The large potential number of projects might exceed

the local capacity of sponsoring organizations (e.g., Beaver Valley Outreach, schoolteachers/school boards, and other eligible non-profit organizations) and may surpass youth interest and/or parental capacity to lead and support these initiatives, respectively. As a small community, The Blue Mountains faces unique challenges and opportunities in fostering youth engagement in climate action projects.

- If the Town were to narrow its focus solely to The Blue Mountains, Grey County would rescind its support. Grey County's support emphasizes county-wide engagement, alleviating some of the regional engagement responsibilities from Town staff.

For the above reasons, focusing solely on a "Blue Mountains-only" scope is not compatible with the YCAF program's rollout by The Blue Mountains. Instead, the Town can concentrate its staff efforts on engaging with youth and local partners within and near The Blue Mountains. This includes collaboration with the Georgian Bay Community School, high schools in Collingwood, and Georgian College, as well as communities in Southern Georgian Bay, Simcoe County, and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. By prioritizing local engagement and building key relationships, the Town can maximize the impact of its staff time for the local community. This approach will still allow for a regional program that promotes inter-regional connections and supports a variety of youth-led climate projects that would not be possible if The Blue Mountains operated in isolation.

## **Round 2: Increased Partner Support & Project Adjustments**

### Increased County Support

In a conversation with Grey County staff on November 21, 2024, it was determined that the County's Climate Change Coordinator – Outreach and Engagement would provide additional support to the YCAF program. This enhanced support will include leading a grant-writing workshop for stakeholders throughout Grey County and increasing communication efforts with Grey County sponsor and partner organizations, along with the essential contributions from Town staff. Grey County will also utilize its communication channels and attend County-level events, where feasible and in alignment with existing work plans, to promote the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) program beyond The Blue Mountains. Furthermore, they will attend the Town's Project Team meetings to offer advice and input based on the County's experience engaging youth with climate change initiatives, including the annual Youth Climate Action Conference, which engages elementary school students up to grade 8, and with the County's connections to youth-supporting organizations across the County.

### Application & Scoring Adjustments

The selection process for guiding the scoring and decision-making of the Selection Committee will be revised from Round 1 and made available to applicants. The updated guidance will encourage applicants to actively engage with youth or residents in The Blue Mountains and to consider whether the project can be implemented within the Town's geographic boundaries. Additional points will be awarded in the scoring process for proposals that successfully demonstrate local engagement, offering applicants the flexibility to choose the most appropriate methods of Town engagement for their specific project type. This approach will

incentivize youth who thoughtfully incorporate these local connections into their proposals, giving them an advantage in the selection process. All proposals that feature project activities within the designated area (the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation) and meet the other eligibility criteria will be accepted for consideration. However, projects with a weaker connection to The Blue Mountains will receive lower scores and have a reduced likelihood of selection if the sum of eligible project proposal funding requests exceeds the available funding of \$119,000 CAD. If the total funding requested is less than the available amount, all eligible projects that meet a minimum scoring threshold will be funded. As with Round 1, any remaining funds must either be allocated to youth-led projects or returned to the YCAF program.

### Program Sustainability

The welcome letter from the YCAF program to the Town (Attachment 3) states that the program “would also encourage you [the Town] to think of ways that your city [Town] can use the program to institutionalize ways to deepen its commitment to meaningful youth engagement.” During the discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 19, 2024, several ideas were proposed for continuing youth climate engagement beyond Round 2. One suggestion is to support a youth-led initiative aimed at helping young people understand civic engagement opportunities and organize themselves to present their climate-related ideas and challenges at future Town and municipal Council meetings. Town staff will promote this concept to potential sponsoring organizations and assist in identifying prospective youth leaders. Staff will also explore funding sources or partnerships that could support or reimagine the YCAF program for a formal Round 3 of youth engagement and/or funding initiatives in 2026 and beyond. Additionally, the Environmental Sustainability Fund's Terms of Reference could be updated in 2025 to better facilitate youth participation within The Blue Mountains. Although this fund is designed for local projects, any future initiatives stemming from the YCAF program that seek third-party funding or are led by other partners—such as Grey County or non-profit organizations—will likely need a regional focus to justify and sustain ongoing programming.

Town staff, with this additional information, continue to recommend the acceptance of the YCAF grant and the implementation of the microgrant program for youth-led climate action projects. Although the work related to this funding distribution was an addition to the 2024 work plan, the associated work and outcomes align closely with The Blue Mountains Future Story, with the scope of work and mission of the divisions involved, and provide an injection of outside funding that the Town can utilize for the long term sustainability of the community. Round 2 of the YCAF program will be delivered with organizational pride and will build on the experiences of Round 1 to more efficiently deliver this worthy and meaningful program.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

## **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

## **3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

## **4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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See Staff Report CSOPS.24.079 Youth Climate Action Fund Update.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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The Youth Climate Action Fund will provide the Town with \$100,000 USD, which, based on an exchange rate of 1.4, is approximately \$140,000 CAD. According to the preliminary budget outlined in Attachment 1, around 307 hours of work, valued at \$16,800 CAD (which includes work plan time and contingency), will be allocated to the Town for compensation of full-time permanent staff hours during the Grant Period from January to October 31, 2025. Additionally, pre- and post-Grant Period activities are estimated to require 48 staff hours, valued at \$2,629 CAD, which will be covered by the Town's staff budgets for those respective positions.

If we subtract the Town's staff budget allocation of \$2,629 from the YCAF program's contribution of \$16,800 for staff time allocation, the net financial benefit to the Town is approximately \$14,171 CAD.

The Town's YCAF Project Team will hold monthly meetings to review staff time allocation and expenditures. They will also provide recommendations for any time- or cost-saving measures needed to remain within the total YCAF budget of \$15,000 USD (approximately \$21,000 CAD) during the Grant Period.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Monica Quinlan, Director of Corporate and Financial Services / Treasurer

Jennifer Murley, CEO, The Blue Mountains Public Library

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Nicholas Cloet, Sustainability Coordinator [sustainability@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:sustainability@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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1. Preliminary Round 2 YCAF Budget
2. Mayor's Pledge
3. Invitation to Round 2 Correspondence from YCAF Program

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Cloet  
Sustainability Coordinator

Jeffery Fletcher,  
Manager of Sustainability & Solid Waste

Alan Pacheco  
Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:  
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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CSOPS.24.088 Youth Climate Action Fund Update - Additional Information.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 Preliminary Round 2 YCAF Budget.pdf - Attachment 2 Mayor's Pledge.pdf - Attachment 3 Invitation to Round 2 Correspondence from YCAF Program.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 28, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Jeff Fletcher - Nov 28, 2024 - 8:47 AM**

**Alan Pacheco - Nov 28, 2024 - 8:52 AM**