

Stratford Community Climate Conversations, Session 3, November 28, 2024
Buildings and Land Use, Retrofit and Adaptation Measures

Participant Comments

Question 1:

What do you think you could do for your own home, what have you already done?

- The message participants noted is to assess their own house/space for potential problems and solutions to them
- People have been looking at their insurance coverage and noticing exclusions
- A number of people have backflow/backwater valves and noted costs and effectiveness
- One person had window well covers installed
- Several have dealt with downspout issues
- We can work on roofs that reflect rather than absorb the sun, window awnings, planting deciduous trees, plantation buildings (e.g., in the southern U.S. with deep porches)
- Install heat pumps for cooling
- Install sump pumps for extracting water, experiences reveal that they work well
- Be prepared for emergencies, i.e., be self-sufficient for 72 hours - make a list of what to have on hand, like medications, keep a form on the fridge with medications listed - don't leave the medications in the car as they are susceptible to temperature extremes
- Several people have generators or are thinking about it as the main concern seems to be the grid failing, generators can be run off of propane
- Discussion noted Stratford's grid which has two transformer stations at opposite ends of town in case one fails and where batteries can store power during off peak hours to use during peak hours – some factories in town and the hospital do that as well
- Several commented upon flooding in their own homes and noted flooding as the biggest hazard
- Participants noted need to read the fine print in their insurance policies and to check their sewer coverage
- Discussion around insurance companies paying more attention to these problems and queries as to why insurance companies wouldn't offer reduction in premium costs when home owners make adaptations or changes to reduce the potential of damage to their home from climate events
- A group member talked about how some houses were built on a pond that they played in when they were a child (more reasons for flooding)
- One of the participants lives in a condo and because of that they take collective responsibility for maintenance and making decisions (e.g., what kind of material they will choose while replacing the roof), which makes them change the roof every couple of years. They said they would consider a roof that would reflect heat into consideration

- Limit impermeable surfaces on property to 60% with minimum of 40% permeable
- Natural assets - one resident has added a lot of trees to their property, but noted they are small and it will take a long time for them to mature to point of being most helpful. Others have also planted trees and discussed the notion of water gardens and sponge gardens. An example of a sponge garden (in Quebec) was given noting that it aids in holding the water rather than redirecting it to drains which can overflow.
- Driveway materials were discussed as concrete, which the most popular and most prevalent material, does not absorb water and leads to run-off and it absorbs heat, amplifying heating of the air. Could city encourage residents to replace concrete with green materials when driveways require replacement or building?
- French drain in the garden put in by a landscaper

Question 2:

Which places in Stratford that are at risk? Are there particular issues of concern?

- By the river, at the dam and the boathouse area, the country club, TJ Dolan
- Are solar panels a problem with tornados? What rating do they need to have to withstand the wind?
- Ice Storms and hail and problems with siding on dwellings and other buildings
- The city needs a "real radio" that provides information and warning to the public - e.g., of incoming hail storms so that vehicles can be protected
- Use cell phone to get preparation information out, but is there an infrastructure to do this?
- City storm sewers have now been fixed and storm water ponds assist
- Stratford is at low risk for earthquakes and tornados - nevertheless tornados can affect regions of higher elevation, is there a need for hurricane straps to better attaching roofing?
- Discussion about building on flood plains, e.g., the Tom Patterson Theatre
- People who don't know their neighbours, low-income residents without air conditioning in stifling apartment buildings, homeless people are at the greatest risk from heat events, those without transportation or good mobility
- Discussion about the necessity for organized neighbourhood connectors to check on people and help them in emergencies
- Discussion around Stratford's Emergency Response Plan - the Rotary Complex is the first choice for the marshalling area and Dufferin and Allman are also part of it in the plan where the Rotary Complex is at risk
- A comment regarding construction companies not doing the best in building because of "good old human greed" and the unrelenting drive to maximize profit and note that this is one of the main reasons the houses aren't hazard-safe.
- The provincial government doesn't allow municipalities to change the building codes, which limits what can be done at the municipal level
- There is a great need for low impact development and to seek ways that developers and builders could gain financially for utilizing such development
- Because of groundwater, everywhere is in danger of flooding

- Low-income area residents have few or no options to access the financial means to make climate change adaptations
- There is a lack of education, awareness of the dangers.

Question 3:

What new information did you learn?

- We all learned a lot from the speaker and each other about many different aspects of adapting to climate change
- We need to work on neighbourhood responses to care for those at risk
- Code Red
- Don Valley alternatives
- Added value
- Preparedness table information was great
- Assessments hidden
- What to do with no electricity during storms
- Mental health aspect of climate change, noted problems with fetuses and trauma - how to get more men to be concerned about trauma
- Find "the lever"
- How to get to politicians to enact the policy changes that are needed
- How do you find the message to get to others

Some related resources:

Link to the City of Stratford Emergency Preparedness Plan:

<https://www.stratford.ca/en/live-here/emergencypreparedness.aspx>

Up to date information re City's climate programmes and support:

<https://www.stratford.ca/en/live-here/climate-action.aspx>

Link to Dr. McBean's Institute for Catastrophic Loss:



Institute for Catastrophic
Loss Reduction

Building resilient communities

Institut de prévention
des sinistres catastrophiques

Bâtir des communautés résilientes

<https://www.iclr.org/>