

# The Crosswalk Document

*A municipal climate planning tool for inter-departmental alignment & stakeholder engagement*

*Developer's Guide*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Municipal governments have a critical role to play in climate action. Municipalities have direct control or at least some influence over approximately 50% of national greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) (FCM, 2015). Canada cannot meet its obligations on climate change mitigation without direct action from municipalities. Furthermore, municipalities are at the front lines of climate change impacts including flooding and heat waves. With over 80% of Canadians living in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2018), municipal governments must take a leading role in climate change adaptation.

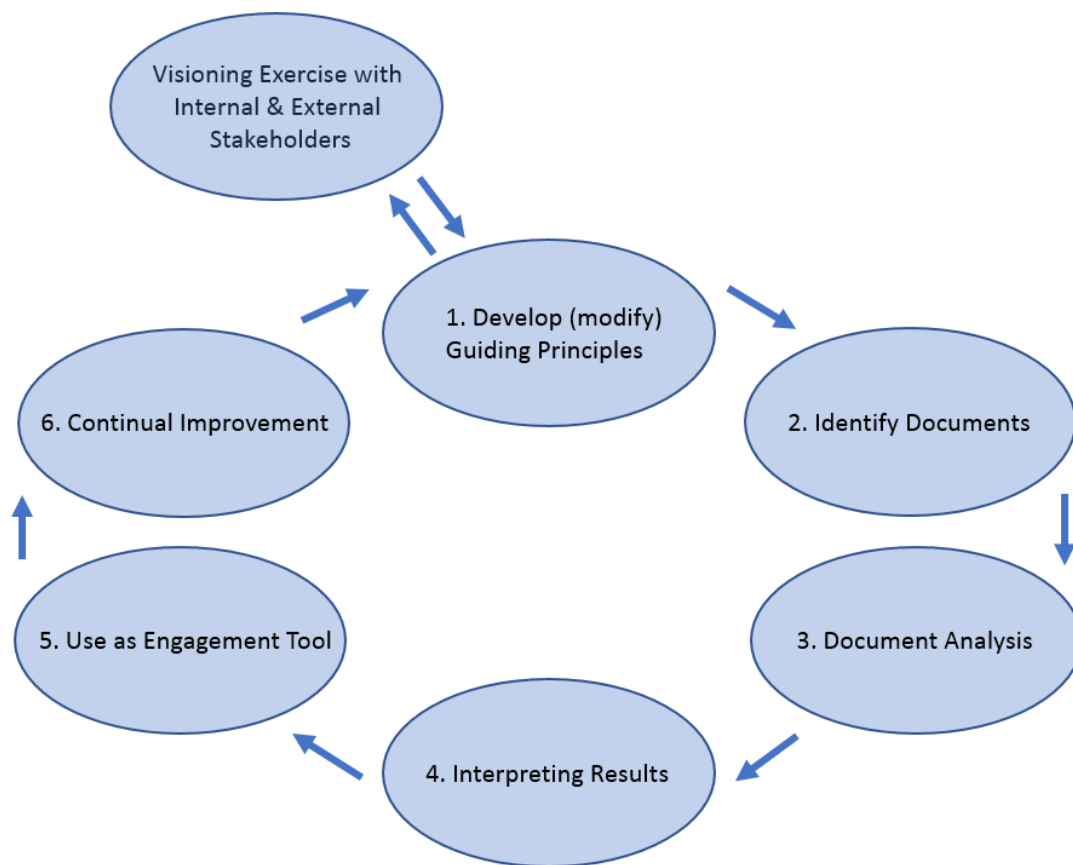
Municipal climate planning is an inherently interdisciplinary exercise. To be effective, it must cut across most - and probably all - facets of municipal operations. In addition, it must involve stakeholders in the community that currently work with Municipalities to deliver key services such as social welfare and environmental protection. Municipal units and community stakeholder groups may or may not have developed a plan for climate action (mitigation or adaptation); even where these exist, they are often siloed rather than coordinated. Identifying “points of contact” across Municipal units and community stakeholder groups, and aligning visions and action plans early in the planning process should allow more time for resolving conflicts and leveraging synergies, leading to more effective climate change planning and in turn lower-carbon and more resilient communities.

This Crosswalk Document is a framework to assist municipal planners and stakeholder groups in the process of identifying those points of contact and identifying possible conflicts and synergies. It is designed for use as a platform for stakeholder discussions, and as a central “information hub” where stakeholders can access and review information between meetings. The original intent was for use in the areas of climate- and community energy planning; however, it could be adapted to other purposes like developing transportation, economic growth, or waste management strategies.

## THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to lead users through developing a Crosswalk Document for their jurisdiction. The guide is structured as follows (Fig 1):

- The Crosswalk Document – What is it?
- Instructions
  - Step 1: Develop Guiding Principles
  - Step 2: Document Identification
  - Step 3: Document Analysis
  - Step 4: Interpreting Results
  - Step 5: Use as Engagement Tool
  - Step 6: Continual Improvement



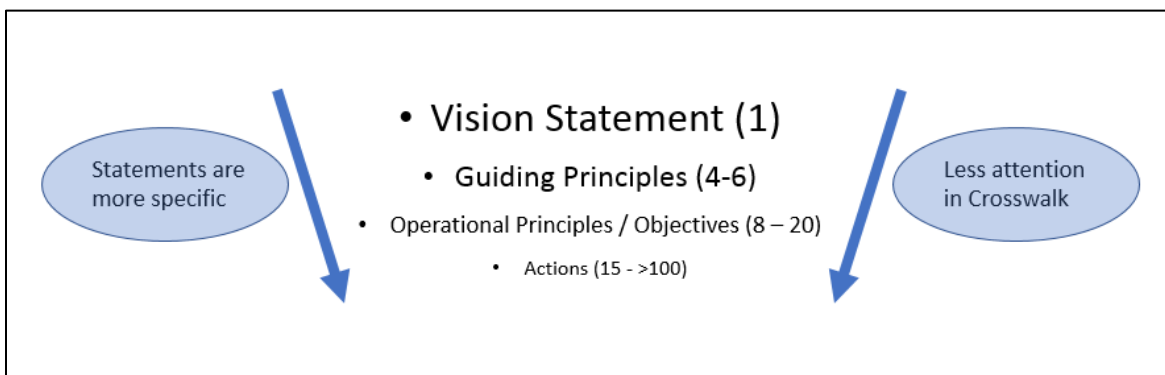
**Figure 1:** The Crosswalk Document design process.

## THE CROSSWALK DOCUMENT – WHAT IS IT?

A Crosswalk Document is a stakeholder engagement and decision-support tool intended to aid municipal employees and stakeholders involved in community energy or climate planning. It is completed prior to, or near the beginning of the stakeholder engagement process.

A Crosswalk Document is a high- to mid-level analysis that focuses on the alignment between the vision statements, guiding principles, and operational principles and/or objectives of existing plans across Municipal units and key community organizations (Fig 2). Once complete, the Crosswalk document consists of two components: 1) a covering document that guides the reader through the approach taken and summarizes results, and 2) an Excel workbook that displays the results in a visual, easy-to-digest manner. It may be useful to open the accompanying Excel workbook template as you read through this guide.

The analysis that builds the Crosswalk document does not include a detailed assessment of specific actions within each plan. Often, specialist knowledge is required to reason through the implications of a particular action on the municipality's climate or energy-related objectives. A closer reading of individual actions can be completed later in the planning process, where required.



**Figure 2:** Generic structure of a planning document. In the Crosswalk, focus more on the higher and mid-level statements.

For example, Halifax Regional Municipality's Urban Forest Master Plan prescribes the following action: "Invest in human capital with urban forest staff training and development" (HRM, 2013, p. 50). How this action would affect the guiding principles selected for the region's climate strategy is not immediately clear. If implemented, would this action "display local government leadership"? Does it imply "support for the use of natural infrastructure" (i.e. trees)? If additional staff were hired, creating jobs, would this "support the economic development of HRM", or "increase social resiliency" in the region? Perhaps in minor ways, but the answers are not straightforward and depend on other variables. Further, there are 32 priority actions in the Urban Forest Master Plan alone. Analysis at this level is labour-intensive, and likely of limited use during preliminary planning stages for a community energy or climate plan.

Rather, it is reasonable to assume that the actions or specific policies prescribed by a given plan are reflective of the vision statement, guiding principles, and objectives offered in that document. The purpose is to capture alignment or disagreements between plans at the higher- to mid-levels. However, while creating the Crosswalk Document you will notice actions relevant to the community energy or climate plan, sometimes in direct and significant ways - these can still be noted (see Step 3).

## STEP 1: DEVELOP THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The first step is to spend some time thinking about the vision, values, and principles that will guide the development of your municipality's community energy or climate plan. Principles should be given significant consideration at this stage, since they will form the lens through which planning documents are evaluated.

If desired, a distinction can be made between **Guiding Principles**, and **Operational Principles**:

**Guiding Principles:** are higher-level planning principles that contribute to the overall frame that will guide plan development. No hierarchy is intended; all guiding principles should be applied consistently, and find their expression throughout the plan.

**Operational Principles:** are more specific than the Guiding Principles. These themes are intended to direct the development of the plan's more practical details, including actions. They describe (in broad terms) what the plan should *do*.

Principles of effective planning have been established by climate organizations, governments, and academic institutions. The principles suggested in the Excel template have been selected from lists compiled by these groups. These principles can be adopted wholesale, and this is what we suggest. However, principles can also be adopted individually, and new ones can be added, if desired. Additional or alternative principles may be developed by members of the core planning team, adapted from other organizations, carried forward from previous municipal climate plans, developed through stakeholder visioning exercises, or some combination of the above. Principles should reflect local needs and values, and may vary by jurisdiction.

It is important to think deeply at this step, but also not to get too attached to the principles selected, since they may be modified after further stakeholder engagement. If you decide to alter the list of suggested principles, first use the “Principles” tab in the Excel workbook to develop your list of principles, then arrange your principles as column headings in the main layout in a manner that suits you.

## STEP 2: DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION

The intent of the Crosswalk is to capture the points of contact between prevailing plans within Municipal units and community organizations that have some bearing on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Reviewing *all* relevant documents may not be realistic, and so it is appropriate to prioritize based on the anticipated impact.

The documents selected for review may be broadly categorized as “internal” (owned by the municipality), and “external” (owned by external stakeholders or other levels of government). Documents should be listed in the furthest left-hand column in the Crosswalk Layout, and categorized (see EXAMPLE Layouts in the Excel workbook). Assuming no privacy or confidentiality issues, it is recommended that the documents be stored digitally as PDFs in a place accessible by all stakeholders, such as a cloud-based storage application like Dropbox or Google drive.

A starting list of potential documents for review may include:

### INTERNAL

- Municipal Plans
  - The Municipal Regional/Master Plan
  - Existing Climate or Community Energy Plans
  - Corporate GHG Reduction Strategy
  - Sustainability Plans
  - Urban Forestry Plan

- Transportation Plan
- Waste Management Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessments
- Consultant Reports
- Municipal Policies
  - Asset Protection
  - Fleet Guidelines & Policies
  - Procurement

## **EXTERNAL**

- Provincial Documents
  - Climate Strategies
  - Environmental Strategies
  - Transportation Strategies
  - Energy Demand/Supply Forecasts
  - Legislation or Regulations related to Climate and Energy
  - Incentive programs
  - Carbon Pricing Program
- Federal Documents
  - Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change
  - Canada's Energy Transition: Generation Energy Council Report
  - Department of Environment and Climate Change Policies
  - Department of Fisheries and Oceans Policies
  - Natural Resources Canada Policy Documents and Reports
- External Stakeholder Documents
  - Local Energy Utility Strategy
  - First Nation Assemblies' Mandates
  - Environmental NGO Programs or Policies
  - Conservation Group Programs or Policies
  - Institutional Energy/Climate Policies
  - Local Chamber of Commerce Policies
  - Builders' Association Policies

## **STEP 3: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Now that you have developed your list of principles and prioritized a list of documents for review, it's time to assess their degree of alignment using the Crosswalk layout. It's recommended to begin with the internal documents, and take stock of the municipality's existing operations before extending the analysis to the broader community.

1. Select a document to analyze (you may want to start with the Regional or Master Plan), and start a new Excel sheet using the "BLANK Individual Plan" tab as a

template. This sheet is dedicated to the review of this plan only. The column headings should be the same as the main layout.

2. Begin to read the document. Focus your efforts on the sections that describe the higher-level planning approach, the vision statement, guiding / core principles, and broader objectives of the plan.
3. When you encounter a statement that affects one of your planning principles, make a note in the Excel sheet in the appropriate column. The note should offer a brief description of the passage in the plan, and provide a page reference. You can also provide comment on how or why the plan affects the principle (See “EXAMPLE Individual Plan” tab in the Excel workbook).
4. Assess the level of alignment between the statement in the plan and the principle in the Crosswalk. Assign the statement a code using the colour coding scheme (Table 1).

**Table 1: Crosswalk Colour Coding Scheme**

LEGEND
Plan (reasonably) does not embody the principle
Plan goes against principle
Plan does not embody or mention the principle, or is ambiguous
Plan supports the principle indirectly, or in a minor way
Plan explicitly supports the principle in its vision and actions

For example, if one of your principles is “Remain flexible & adaptable”, and the document under review is intended to be a “living document”, this shows a high level of alignment and should be coded **green**.

If a principle you’ve selected is “Preserve greenspace”, and your municipality’s transportation plan calls for a new corridor to be developed through existing greenspace, this would be coded **red**.

Often, you would not expect a plan to reflect all the principles you’ve selected. For example, you would not necessarily expect a transportation plan to “Increase building efficiency”. In this case, code the column **brown**.

5. Most plans will contain multiple statements that impact a given principle, and the degree of alignment can vary. These features should be coded separately, extending the column as required.
6. After reading through the plan and conducting preliminary coding, it is useful to complete a keyword search (Ctrl + F) to help identify relevant passages that may



have been missed. Come up with a few keywords that are related to each principle and compile them into a list that you can keep at your desk for quick reference. The following is a list of potential climate and energy-related terms to help get you started:

**Table 2: Keyword searches used in document review**

Climate	Emission(s)	Adapt(ation)	Resilien(t)	Efficien(t)
Energy	Eco(nomy)	Eco(system)	Sustain(able)	(Pre)caution
Hazard	Social	Environment(al)	Stakeholder	Public
Consult	Lifecycle	Measure	Quantify	Interim
Leader	Security	Source	Infrastructure	Equit(able)
Fair(ness)	Transport(ation)	Care	Future	Risk

7. After reviewing and coding the statements in the document, consider all the entries you’ve made for a given column. Try to “average” the results for one column and choose the colour code that is most representative, overall. Use your best judgment. Enter this colour code into row 10: “Plan Average”.
8. Once all columns have been “averaged”, copy and paste the results into the appropriate row of the main Crosswalk Layout.
9. Repeat the above process for all the documents you identified in Step 2.

#### STEP 4: INTERPRETING RESULTS

The results of the analysis will offer insights at two scales. Firstly, the columns of the Crosswalk layout provides a quick impression of how the municipality (and/or external stakeholders) are doing with respect to upholding the selected principles. Mostly green squares would indicate a high degree of alignment, while several red and orange squares indicate room for improvement. Significant numbers of orange squares in a column may indicate that this principle has not been given due consideration up to this point. For example, concerns over social justice and equitable outcomes have been recently gaining traction in the broader culture. In previous plans, it may be unclear whether the principle “Distribute costs and benefits equitably” has been considered. A column of orange squares can highlight a planning blind spot.

Second, visually scanning the rows gives an impression of how a particular plan aligns with the selected principles. It allows a user to see whether the municipal transportation strategy, for example, is lined up with the principles of the forthcoming community energy plan. The individual plan sheets allow a user to “zoom in” on areas of interest to get more detail. For example, suppose you see a red colour code and want to know what the issue is. You can quickly jump to the individual plan sheet for that plan to see a brief explanation for the code, and be referred to the relevant page in the document for further detail.

## STEP 5: USE AS AN ENGAGEMENT TOOL

The Crosswalk Document is intended to be used as a platform for stakeholder engagement. Climate and community energy planning processes often include an internal steering committee made up of elected officials and municipal staff from various business units. The Crosswalk Document is intended to display the ways that other business units will affect the climate or community energy plan under development.

For example, by looking at the appropriate row in the Excel Layout, the owner of the transportation plan will be able to see how their department is poised to affect the principles of the plan under development. The plan owner, being most familiar with the details of the transportation plan, will be in a good position to offer feedback and suggest changes to the Crosswalk Document that offer more insight into the relationship between the two plans. Create deeper discussions during steering committee meetings using the following steps:

1. Prior to meeting, distribute the Crosswalk document to members of the internal steering committee.
2. Request that business unit representatives review the main Layout, and the individual sheet for their plan(s).
3. Request that business unit representatives provide feedback in the Excel sheet (comment, or track changes) prior to meeting.
4. Committee members arrive to the meeting better informed, with points for discussion.
5. Crosswalk Excel sheet can be put onto the meeting room screen as a reference point for discussion.

## STEP 6: CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

A Crosswalk is intended to be a living document and to be modified throughout the planning process. It should be stored in a location that can be accessed by stakeholders, such as a cloud-based server like Dropbox or Google Drive. Additional documents may surface that warrant being added to the Crosswalk. Principles may be added, removed, or modified by the core project team as required. Statements that were coded during the initial coding process may be re-interpreted after further reflection or discussion with stakeholders and document owners. There may also be additional statements that were missed during the first reading of the plan that can be added to the Excel sheet. The Crosswalk will be a useful tool to the extent that it is viewed, altered, and discussed consistently. It must become living part of the planning process, not simply be filed away as a “completed” box-checking exercise.

## COVERING DOCUMENT

Once the above steps have been completed, generate a covering document that summarizes the rationale for developing the principles, document selection, any deviation from the methods described here, and results of the initial analysis. The format for such a covering document is left to the reader, but should be written with stakeholders as the intended audience. This covering document should be distributed to stakeholders along with the Crosswalk Excel sheet as a contribution to the stakeholder engagement process, used to both inform, and solicit feedback.

## References

- Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). (2013, July). Urban Forest Master Plan. Retrieved from [https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/streets-sidewalks/HALREG%201246%20UrbanForestReport\\_HighRes\\_SINGLEPAGE\\_Mon20\\_Combined.pdf](https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/transportation/streets-sidewalks/HALREG%201246%20UrbanForestReport_HighRes_SINGLEPAGE_Mon20_Combined.pdf)
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