



# Sustainable Orillia

## Our Mission

*To engage the community in actions that build more rewarding and healthy lives for the people of Orillia, our children and grandchildren.*

*Find your place in one or more of our Sectors:*

Agriculture & Natural Capital

Goods & Services

Infrastructure & Energy

Education

Arts & Culture

Health & Wellness

Youth Council

## SUSTAINABLE ORILLIA:

# FOCUS 2020

While COVID-19 has impacted each of us in different ways, it has also likely elicited some common thoughts about our personal and societal vulnerabilities. It appears to have created, as well, a common cause response which has most of us following the protocols recommended by public health officials and our political leaders.

The pandemic may have also raised thoughts regarding our vulnerability as a species and the overall sustainability of the lives we lead. In both cases, we may find ourselves thinking about the impact of a simple, microscopic organism—the coronavirus—just trying to get through its life. In doing so, it has substantially changed the physical, social, and economic health of humans on this planet.

Consider, though, that most species on our planet are oblivious to the plight that humans currently find themselves in—a sharp contrast to the usual state of affairs where most of us are oblivious to the plight of billions of species as we go about our daily living.

So where in all this turmoil can we find the lasting messages, actions and behavioural changes that allow us to make the best of our situation and imbed those messages, actions and changes into our future behaviours? For example, as we all rely more on video conferencing for work, volunteer activities, or staying in touch with family, can we see using this technology post-COVID to reduce travel and hence reduce our GHG emissions?

Recently the Board of Sustainable Orillia undertook a SWOT analysis ("Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and

Threats"). In this analysis we were careful to recognize that, while weaknesses and threats exist, we need to look to our strengths and find the opportunities that exist. This thinking became the framework for our 2020 Strategic Plan. The objectives that support the strategies will become actions during the year.

The actions may not be events-based as last year, at least not as long as COVID protocols are in place. One clear opportunity is the increased use of video and electronic publishing to communicate, educate and advise on sustainability. Another opportunity is to see how COVID-19 may change our behaviours and teach us to enjoy life even more than before the pandemic.

COVID is a threat. In some cases, it has exploited weaknesses in our society and economy. However, it has also made us aware of our strengths and how we might turn this pandemic into some opportunities for positive behavioural change—change that will enable a more sustainable future for our community, our country and our planet.

At Sustainable Orillia we are looking for these opportunities. We want to share them with you. We ask that you also share with us and our community opportunities that you perceive. We will be doing our best to take these opportunities and turn them into tangible projects and programs during this year. We are convinced we can advance our sustainability in the face of COVID-19—and through what it has taught us.



Follow Us



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[sustainableorillia.ca](http://sustainableorillia.ca)



## BECOME A "FRIEND"

Would you like to become more engaged with Sustainable Orillia's quest to address environmental issues affecting us in the City of Orillia? If the answer is 'yes,' consider becoming a "Friend of Sustainable Orillia"—and encourage others to do so, as well.

A year ago Sustainable Orillia's founding group set out to build a network of citizens dedicated to making Orillia a more sustainable community—a vision we pursue through programs, communications and initiatives that are:

- influencing behavior change within the community in support of the City of Orillia's efforts to become a more sustainable community;
- building awareness of the actions that individuals, businesses, organizations and the municipality can take;
- becoming a trusted source of information and engagement for matters of sustainability for stakeholders and the community across Orillia and area; and
- encouraging a community sense of optimism based on collective action and progress towards a more sustainable—more carbon neutral—way of life.

Today, Sustainable Orillia is an incorporated not-for-profit entity with a required governance structure in place, operating through an ever-expanding network of partners.

To be effective, it's important that the organization be perceived as a well-run and well-supported organization, with members or Friends of the organization. Simply put, the more "Friends" Sustainable Orillia has, the greater our collective voice in championing the changes, large and small, required to ensure a healthy future for all.

As a Friend of Sustainable Orillia, your input into the organization's direction will be encouraged. Feedback and suggestions from a broad and diversified membership will assure Sustainable Orillia of relevant, real-time input to inform our plans and priorities. You would also participate in the approval of various administrative decisions, including the election of the Board of Directors. In addition to having voting rights at the Annual General Meeting, as a Friend you become eligible to join one of Sustainable Orillia's six Sector Committees or to be appointed as a Director.

The Board, with input from the Sector Committee Chairs, is currently finalizing the details—including the fee structure and a list of benefits—to invite all interested folks to become Friends of Sustainable Orillia. Some of these plans will be impacted by the current COVID-19 restrictions, but Sustainable Orillia expects to be in a position to say more towards the end of May.

Stay tuned. We look forward to welcoming you as a colleague on this journey to make Orillia more sustainable.

## COVID-19 LESSONS



**"Never let a good crisis go to waste."**

attributed to Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

The world in 2020 is facing the crisis of COVID-19, a pandemic which has brought the world economy to a standstill. As we in Orillia, in Canada, and across the world stay home to

reduce the pace of the pandemic and the deaths that it is causing, it is appropriate, during this pause in our "normal" lives, to think about the lessons the pandemic is providing for us.

At Sustainable Orillia, our goal is to encourage our community—and the larger society—to move toward sustainable living and, in doing so, to confront the climate crisis that threatens our future. Accordingly, we offer relevant lessons with the hope that what we can learn from this pandemic will help us reduce and/or mitigate the even greater threats coming our way from the climate crisis. As you're reading them, please ask yourself, "How can we use this crisis to make things better?"

Here is your link to Sustainable Orillia's "What's New" Page.

From that page, scroll down to:

[COVID-19 Lessons for Climate Change Action](#)

***"The six stages of climate denial are:***

*It's not real. It's not us. It's not that bad. It's too expensive to fix. Aha, here's a great solution (that actually does nothing). And — oh no! Now it's too late.*

*You really should have warned us earlier."*

*- Katharine Hayhoe, climate scientist*

## MINI TIP

To slow the spread of coronavirus, we've had to physically distance ourselves from others, which has meant a lot of lifestyle changes including the way we get around. While we must stay home as much as possible, we also need to get fresh air and exercise. The answer? How about getting on a bike?

"Now that there are a lot fewer cars on the road, more and more people are seeing that cycling is a viable choice," said Brian Pincott, executive director of Vélo Canada Bikes. "It's a great family activity... It's impossible not to be happy when you're getting around on your bike. And God knows we need a little bit of happiness."



## SECTOR COMMITTEE UPDATE



Sustainable Orillia's six sector committees are the active planning and operational teams within Sustainable Orillia's network of committed volunteers. Launched as an integral part of Sustainable Orillia in spring of 2019, the Sector Committees reach out deep into both their respective sectors and the wider community to build awareness, engagement, and results on critical sustainable issues.

From the outset, the Sector Committees, inspired by the ideas generated at the May 2019 launch meeting, scoped out a robust portfolio of sustainable initiatives, later summarized in the working document Fifty Shades of Green. Originally organized across nine sectors, the committees recently realigned into six Sector Committees: a move that allows them to streamline the communications, planning and implementation of their key programs. For a description of the domains these Sector Committees oversee, please visit our website at [sustainableorillia.ca](http://sustainableorillia.ca)

Close to forty dedicated volunteers have brought their expertise, creativity and passion to these Committees. To date their results include coordinating events such as the Electric Vehicle (EV) Show last September; the hosting of several key speaking events during last November's Sustainable Orillia Month, the Youth Council's 'Boomerang Bag' initiative, and more recently, produced by the Agriculture & Natural Capital Sector Committee, the timely Orillia City Food Map 2020 featuring retail and other food sources within the City of Orillia. The Fifty Shades of Green document, plus the Orillia City Food Map 2020 and other sector updates are all available on Sustainable Orillia's website.

Building momentum from scratch takes tremendous effort and perseverance. These accomplishments are a measure of the dedication, energy and purpose that the Committees and their members have applied while making things happen that benefit all of Orillia.

We look forward to sharing more news from Sustainable Orillia's sector committees in future issues of this newsletter as well as on our website ([sustainableorillia.ca](http://sustainableorillia.ca)) and Facebook page. And as with all Sustainable Orillia initiatives, you—our readers, partners and interested friends—are always welcome to participate, either in person or through your comments and suggestions c/o [info@sustainableorillia.ca](mailto:info@sustainableorillia.ca)

## SECTOR COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



### Agriculture and Natural Capital

*(a merger of the Agriculture & Food/Land & Water sectors)*

Bernard Pope (C)



### Infrastructure and Energy

*(a merger of Energy & Transportation and Housing, Development & Investment sectors)*

Dave VanAlstyne (C)

Mike Jones (VC)

Sophie Mathewson (VC)

Jackie Ramler (VC)



### Goods and Services

Co-Chairs:

Robb MacDonald

Tyler Knight



### Education and Youth

Co-Chairs:

John Knapp

Ellen Field

Zac Waite

Michael Shillolo



### Arts and Culture

Gillian Lowry (C)



### Health and Wellness

Brenda Armstrong (C)

\*(C) - Chair; (VC) - Vice Chair

*"Plant-based eating has gained popularity for two very good reasons: it's a great way to improve your health and an important step in tackling the climate crisis."*

*- Chatelaine magazine, Mar/Apr 2020*

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## CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Go to our "[What's New](#)" page and scroll down to Health & Wellness Infographic