

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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**envirocentre**  
Bringing environmental change to life



EnviroCentre is based in and operates on **unceded, unsundered Algonquin, Anishinabeg territory.**

## BRINGING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE TO LIFE



### OUR MISSION

EnviroCentre's mission is to provide people, communities and organizations with practical solutions to lighten their environmental impact in lasting ways.

### OUR VISION

Dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are achieved through inspired environmental action and positive change.

### OUR VALUES

EnviroCentre is committed to the following set of values which help unite us and guide our actions each and every day.



#### CREATING CONCRETE CHANGE

Making change effective, tangible and relevant.



#### PULLING TOGETHER

Building strong relationships.



#### EXHIBITING A CAN-DO SPIRIT

Being approachable, positive and creative.



#### LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Living values, not just telling.



#### LEARNING EVERY DAY

Pursuing continuous knowledge, understanding and innovation.



This document is available in an accessible format. Please email us at [communications@envirocentre.ca](mailto:communications@envirocentre.ca) and we will be happy to send it to you.

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR & THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends and partners,

2020 kicked off what will be the most important decade in climate action for our planet. But two short months in, in March 2020, Ottawa ground to a halt with the rest of the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. What ensued was a year of huge challenges across our community. Lockdowns stopped services and threw local businesses and residents into economic uncertainty. Restrictions limited outreach, travel and social interactions, and sent everyone who could, home to work remotely. Social movements and unrest south of the border and here in Canada brought inequality and systemic racism to the forefront of our collective consciousness. Our world fundamentally transformed, and questions whirled across the country and back about what would come next. And in the midst of all this, the themes of resilience and green recovery emerged as a consistent call from experts and average citizens across the country.

EnviroCentre moved to working remotely mid-March, 2020, and as lockdowns closed the majority of our services, we pivoted quickly to focus our staff energies on forms of outreach appropriate to pandemic times. We were fortunate to retain our whole staff team, and set to work building out new digital outreach formats, including our Green Beat newsletter, the Green Room digital chat, myGREENlifestyle.ca (a green lifestyle learning site) and Ottawa Green Business.ca (a simplified digital component for our business program). Our long-standing 'Bike-to-Work Month' initiative moved to a broader-reach approach for the region and was aptly renamed, 'Let's Bike Ottawa'. Our popular EV day shifted online and became the Drive Green Ottawa initiative.

Throughout this time, EnviroCentre prioritized the health, safety and security of our staff team, our clientele, and our community, and despite the huge challenges of the time, we were able to launch tools that have the capacity to spread knowledge of practical climate action across the region and beyond.

In fall 2020 we made the decision to put our office building at 326 Somerset on the market, and move our staff team to a permanently remote format. Our team was 100% in support of the new format, which both supports our core mission to reduce GHG emissions, and supports a healthy work-life balance for our staff in this challenging time and beyond. The building sold December 2020.

Like many other local organizations, our revenue from services took an enormous hit, but with the support of the federal wage subsidy and the tireless work of our staff team and board of directors, we were able to maintain the stability required to continue our work and build out our capacity for new work in 2021.

Our impact in the community in 2020 was strong, but different. Some of our core outreach programs saw a drop-off in participation as contracts were paused, and services were modified for digital-only approaches. On the other hand, our pivot to digital outreach allowed us to expand our reach, and several of our programs saw significant growth. We reached out to more than 110,000 individuals and 18,000 local businesses this year, providing information on climate action and supports to bring that action to life. Through our partnerships and outreach, we connected with 546 community groups and organizations.

Throughout all of this, EnviroCentre recognized that we are part of an environmental movement here in Canada that remains in large proportion white and privileged. We are committed to addressing inclusivity in our workplace, our work, and our community, and we go into 2021 with a renewed commitment to and understanding of justice and equity, environmental and otherwise.

Sincerely,



**MICHAEL VAN AANHOUT**  
Chair of the EnviroCentre  
Board of Directors



**SHARON COWARD**  
Executive Director of  
EnviroCentre

# BRINGING ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE TO LIFE

## Does Individual Action Matter?



2020 saw the call to individual action on climate become a flash point for debate. Of course, in some ways, this is nothing new. Activists and regular citizens everywhere live suspended in the constant and living questions: What can I do? What matters? What matters most?

The answers are not static. The debate comes around the 'What matters most?' question, and it's a good one. When facing down the spectre of a 60% emissions reduction over the next decade, 'What matters most?' starts to look like the billion-dollar question. There is very little time to do an enormous amount.

Of course, EnviroCentre supports individual action tirelessly, relentlessly and sometimes quite loudly. Why? Do we honestly think that reusing plastic bags, walking to the store, biking to work and retrofitting your home will transform the world over the next decade? Well, yes, we do. And here's why:

## Individuals do, decide and create everything.

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There is no question that collective action, legislation and high-level policy change are required to move the needle on climate. There is also no question that without this type of collective action, there are large sections of our lives – and our GHG impact – over which we have no control in our day-to-day lives. But anyone who has tried to lead a climate initiative, gather support for a policy, get a 'green' government official elected or pass legislation knows that none of these things are possible without public support. That is, the support of individuals.



Individuals who take action in their own lives tend toward climate hope, not despair. Individuals who consider the impact of their lives are more likely to understand and support the politics and policy of climate action. Individuals who take action in their own lives bring their newfound hope and understanding to work and shape business policies and practice. And, yes, individuals who ask for different options in their shops and services and vote with their dollars shift the tide of consumer production. Especially when acting together, of course, but it starts with you, the individual.

Individuals run large corporations. Individuals sit on corporate and not-for-profit boards. Individuals run for office and head up global financial institutions. Individuals (together and alone) will decide our collective future.

For certain, individuals cannot and should not be expected to personally take on the burden of the scope of climate action required over the next decade and beyond. Nor should individuals be asked to attain perfection within a system deeply tilted toward waste and fossil-fuel consumption. Neither, however, can individuals expect any of the high-level, high-impact change required to take place without their action and support.

So, get on it, Ottawa. Act, talk, reduce, support. **Your action matters.**



### GREEN HOMES

- Conducted 301 pre-retrofit assessments and 295 post-retrofit visits for our Home Energy Programs
- Installed 62 smart thermostats — reducing natural gas consumption by 11,691 m<sup>3</sup>
- Reduced natural gas consumption by 161,757 m<sup>3</sup> through retrofitting 157 older homes as part of our Home Winterproofing Program (funded by Enbridge Gas Distribution)
- Conducted 298 pre-retrofit assessments and 106 post-assessments in Quebec through our partnership with Services EcoPlus
- Conducted 4 ASHRAE level audits for Daybreak Housing, a non-profit housing provider, allowing them access to municipal funding for energy efficiency upgrades in their properties



### GREEN TRANSPORTATION

- Delivered 18 virtual cycling workshops to a total of 473 attendees
- Ottawa's first ever Let's Bike Month had over 1500 participants and shifted from focusing on commuter cyclists to ALL cyclists!
- Hosted the first ever virtual Drive Green Ottawa with 7 events over the course of a week
- School Active Transportation Planning created a total of 222 Walk-a-Block maps for OCDSB and OCSB schools



### GREEN BUSINESS

- The Ottawa Green Business Hub added four new members to the network in 2020, who collectively employed over 750 people — increasing the number of staff reached through member organizations to over 32,000 people in Ottawa
- Delivered 4 events and 12 workshops/ education session for Ottawa Green Business Hub members and the larger business community to 264 attendees
- Delivered 16 Let's Talk Green Economy workshops to 85 attendees, and posted webinars online so that they are accessible to the general public
- EnviroCentre launched the Ottawa Green Business online program, which allows us to educate businesses on the benefits of sustainability in the workplace through workshops, worksheets and other interactive resources



### GREEN COMMUNITY

- Participated in 2 Rain Garden webinars with Ecology Ottawa and the City of Ottawa
- Participated in 4 events in our community
- Hosted 2 virtual events for our community
- EnviroCentre launched a weekly climate action chat called The Green Room. We hosted 31 guests and had 5583 viewers

## **ENERGY AUDITS**

EnviroCentre provides many home energy audit services, also known as home energy assessments, throughout eastern Ontario. Energy assessments are comprehensive and detailed home inspections that focus on energy performance, indoor air quality, and occupant home comfort. Energy assessments provide homeowners with valuable information about their homes' energy efficiency and how to make improvements that reduce energy consumption and their carbon footprint. Energy assessments are conducted by registered energy advisors (REAs), who collect energy performance data and process it through sophisticated energy modeling software to produce home energy ratings and educational reports. Energy assessments are the cornerstone of EnviroCentre's home energy programs.

## **GREEN ASSESSMENT SERVICES**

As a result of COVID-19, EnviroCentre's energy team had to halt home assessments for a significant part of the year. We were able to shift our focus to enhancing the educational offerings around residential retrofits and energy audits by creating several workshops and courses. By leveraging our technical skills and practical knowledge, these courses are part of our long-term planning to accelerate residential retrofits in Ottawa and its surroundings.

The team continues to provide energy audits providing access to grants and free services from our utility partners.

## **NEW DESIGNATIONS**

EnviroCentre's technical staff continues to seek new designations to stay relevant in the building science field. This year our Registered Energy Advisors received training and certifications in both Net Zero for Contractors and Net Zero for Renovators. Additionally, the team participated in training to obtain certification in Energy Star for New Homes, a labelling program delivered by Natural Resources Canada, an initiative designed to encourage energy efficient construction in new housing, which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## **PARTNERING FOR CHANGE**

2020 was an exciting year that saw EnviroCentre develop a variety of new and existing partnerships to expand our scope and reach and deepen our expertise in building science and home energy performance.

Working with local companies, Building Science Trust and Arborus Consulting, we are assisting homeowners in the area diagnose air leakage in homes, and come up with long term plans to enhance efficiencies where they live.

We continue to explore opportunities to work with Co-Energy, a local energy cooperative which provides financing for large scale retrofits and access to renewable energy.

EnviroCentre also continued its presence in the home construction industry by participating in several committees and focus groups with organizations, including the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) and the Greater Ottawa Home Builder's Association (GOHBA).

We continue to partner with and represent many highly skilled REAs and provide support, training and business improvement opportunities. Our experienced advisors speak volumes about EnviroCentre's commitment and professionalism in the field of energy assessments.



## OTTAWA GREEN BUSINESS

In the fall of 2020, EnviroCentre launched the Ottawa Green Business Online program, which allows us to educate businesses on the benefits of sustainability in the workplace through workshops, worksheets and other resources. Organizations can join the online program and receive digital resources to help them through their sustainability goals, build awareness of their environmental impact and how to reduce it, and engage their staff in the process.

The Ottawa Green Business Hub, comprised of organizations committed to working toward a low-carbon future by tracking and reducing their operational impacts, supported by teams of sustainability professionals locally and nation-wide.

The Ottawa Green Business Hub added four new members to the network in 2020, including high-profile organizations, like the National Arts Centre and Community Foundations of Canada. These new members employed over 750 people, increasing the number of staff reached through member organizations to over 32,000 people in Ottawa.

Ottawa Green Business hosted sustainable facility tours in partnership with IKEA Ottawa and CSV Architects. We also hosted a virtual Speaker Series, inviting green business leaders to share their sustainability knowledge and practices with attendees. Guest organizations included REALPac, Efficiency Canada, IKEA Canada, Project Neutral, and Bridgehead.

The virtual Day of Recognition was well-attended and included speakers from Carleton University, Open Concept and Ecology Ottawa. Sustainability awards were presented to IKEA Ottawa, Shaw Centre, and Carleton University for their climate action efforts in 2019.

# Ottawa *Green* Business Pledge

by **envirocentre**

**To keep our world healthy and stable, we need to cut carbon.**

From public health to local resilience to food security to the threat of species extinction and economic stability, climate change impacts everything.

There are 18,000 businesses in Ottawa. We can have a huge impact on change.

**OGB businesses have committed to working toward a net-zero Ottawa in 2050.**

We are businesses that support positive action on climate, intent on working toward a net-zero, sustainable and better city.

**Carbon reduction takes everyone. Ottawa businesses are moving the needle on climate. Join in.**



### **LET'S BIKE MONTH**

For the past 10 years, EnviroCentre has partnered with the City of Ottawa to celebrate and encourage commuter cycling through our popular Bike to Work Ottawa campaign. Like many events and celebrations in 2020, we had to postpone and realign our program to meet the needs and reality of our community as we navigated the impact COVID-19. After looking at developing transportation habits and feedback from our participants and partners, we decided to shift the campaign to include ALL cyclists. The new Let's Bike program continues to support our commuters, but also allows those who may be new to cycling, cycle for leisure or those who use their bike for general transportation to feel included and encouraged. We had wonderful feedback from our partners, participants and long supporting employers as we launched Let's Bike Month in September. A new interactive app that made participating even easier than years before was well received by our long-standing participants. Though events look a little different when everything heads online, we successfully held 18 workshops and had over 1500 participants overall! We are looking forward to shifting Let's Bike Month to an annual June campaign and supporting Ottawa's cyclists for many more years to come!

### **SCHOOL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

School Active Transportation Planning (SATP) advances active and sustainable transportation in Ottawa elementary schools by focusing on increasing the number of students who walk, wheel, or ride the bus every day. EnviroCentre works with Ottawa Public Health to deliver the program on behalf of the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and the City of Ottawa.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person support and events were paused. With parent, teacher, and school administration attention drawn toward the immediate needs of their families and communities, SATP pivoted from intensive support at our 11 SATP schools to providing increased access to online resources for all schools.

In order to support the changing transportation patterns of families while encouraging active transportation and promoting school zone safety, SATP created a total of 222 'Walk-a-Block' maps for OCDSB and OCSB schools. The Fall 2020 OSTA transportation survey found that overall, 8% of families at both OCDSB and OCSB schools reported choosing to Walk-a-Block, a significant increase over previous years. Results also showed that 80% of families at OCDSB and OCSB schools chose active and sustainable modes of transportation for getting to school (walk, bike, school bus/van, public transit, Walk-a-Block, or carpool) in Fall 2020. As schools and families adapt to new routines and travel patterns, SATP continues to support them with fun and engaging resources.

### **TRAVELWISE**

TravelWise is a City of Ottawa program co-designed with EnviroCentre. The program's goal is to reduce the number of single-occupancy commuters travelling to Ottawa workplaces and is now delivered by EnviroCentre on the City of Ottawa's behalf. Due to COVID-19, the TravelWise program was put on pause until such time that public health guidelines and our City of Ottawa partners allow for re-engagement and supported commuter events and booths.



### **WINTER WALK DAY**

Winter Walk Day (WWD), is a province-wide annual celebration held each February. This event encourages active transportation during all seasons. EnviroCentre's SATP team supports Ottawa elementary schools by sharing resources to coordinate fun, safe, and engaging events. In February 2020, events were held at 5 SATP schools reaching 1815 students and their families.

### **CYCLING SAFETY AWARENESS PROGRAM**

The goal of the Cycling Safety and Awareness Program (CSAP) is to expand the reach and personalize the message of the City of Ottawa's communications about new cycling facilities and important safety information for all road and pathway users. EnviroCentre's outreach and engagement staff work on behalf of the City of Ottawa when attending events or sharing information for this project. With COVID-19 and public health regulations that did not allow for personal engagements, our work was limited to installation of pathway signage, door to door delivery of new infrastructure information and support for the development and distribution of the e-scooter pilot project survey



### **WINTER CYCLING**

EnviroCentre celebrates and encourages Ottawa's year-round cyclists. In February 2020, we headed out to the bike lanes on a very cold morning and handed out Bridgehead coupons for a free warm drink. We also hosted a public workshop to encourage residents to give cycling a try, even in the colder months. We continue to share tips and resources about winter cycling through our social media and dedicated webpage.



### **DRIVE GREEN OTTAWA**

EnviroCentre hosted the first ever virtual Drive Green Ottawa during National Drive Electric Week (September 28 - October 2) with 515 participants. The main goal was to raise awareness among residents about the benefits of switching to EVs, understand the associated costs, rebates and savings, showcase models and local resources. Through partnering with the City of Ottawa, Envari, Electric Vehicle Council of Ottawa (EVCO), Plug'n Drive, and Natural Resources Canada, we were able to offer a daily Speaker Series, a Drive-By Demo of electric vehicles throughout the City and an EV Q&A with EVCO through EnviroCentre's Green Room.



**VIRTUAL BICYCLE BALL**

In 2020, we held our second annual Bicycle Ball - and went virtual! We hosted guests online with short, engaging performances by local artists, talks by environmental leaders, a virtual dance lesson and party to cap it off! We also provided a suggested plant-based menu.

The Bicycle Ball raised funds to support EnviroCentre's climate action work.



**RAIN**

Collaborated with Ecology Ottawa and the City of Ottawa to host 2 virtual workshops about the Cornerstone Community Rain Garden - 36 participants attended. Our staff volunteered to maintain the demonstration rain garden throughout the year.



**GREEN ROOM**

EnviroCentre launched the Green Room in May, to stay connected with our community, and feature the work that organizations are doing across the country to fight climate change. We've hosted 31 guests and had 5583 viewers.

## PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

### CITY OF OTTAWA

EnviroCentre is proud to work with the City of Ottawa to provide engaging and highly effective community outreach for sustainability programs. We provide education and encouragement regarding cycling, active transportation, stormwater management, and workplace commuting support through various programs.



### ASSOCIATION OF FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES OF OTTAWA

EnviroCentre received a Bilingual Ottawa micro-grant, aimed to increase recognition of Ottawa's bilingual character, to promote Francophonie and foster the collective interests of the francophone community across the city of Ottawa by investing in concrete projects designed by and for the community. EnviroCentre received this grant to increase our program offerings and communications in French.



### ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$108 million to 629 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario. EnviroCentre received an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant to expand the Carbon 613 program from 2018 - 2020.



### GREEN ECONOMY CANADA

Green Economy Canada (GEC) is a national organization that works with community organizations like EnviroCentre to launch and grow Green Economy Hubs across Canada. Green Economy Hubs — including EnviroCentre's Ottawa Green Business Hub — work with local businesses to set and achieve sustainability targets. We were happy to work with GEC in 2020 to expand and improve business sustainability across Canada.

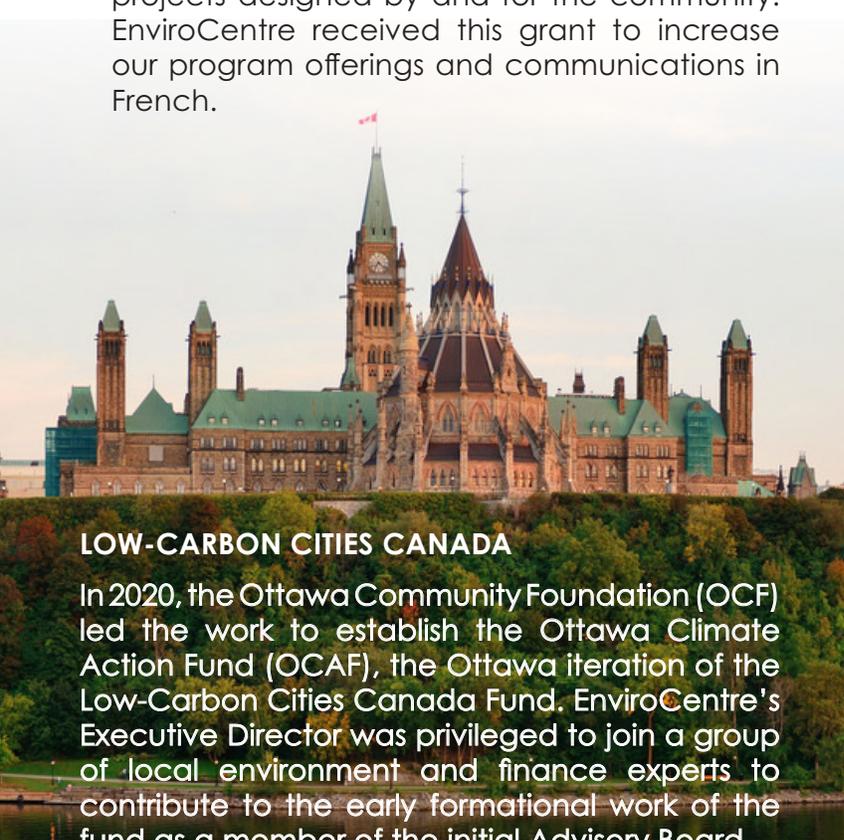


### OTTAWA ENERGY COLLECTIVE IMPACT GROUP

In 2017, local agencies came together to form the Ottawa Energy Collective Impact Initiative (OECI), whose aim was to address a local transition to low-carbon energy through a multi-stakeholder approach, including 60 local stakeholders representing eight sectors. The work of OECI focuses on residential building stock retrofits, encompassing five action pillars, the central of which is the Existing Buildings Pillar, led by EnviroCentre. The work of the OECI aligns with the City of Ottawa's newly approved Climate Change Master Plan, which set new targets to reduce community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 100% by 2050. In 2020, OECI formally incorporated to better support the collective work of partners and the region.

### LOW-CARBON CITIES CANADA

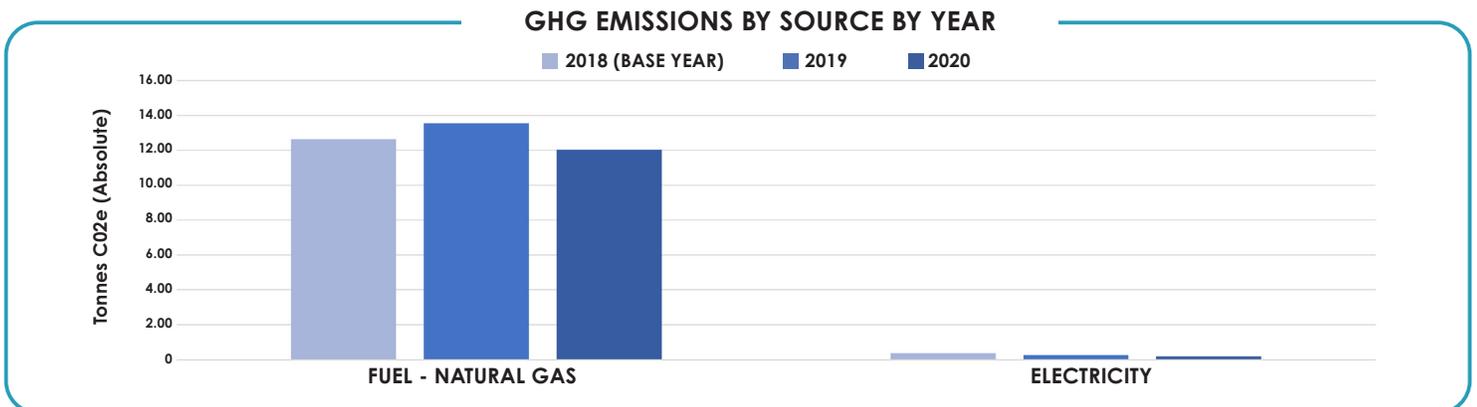
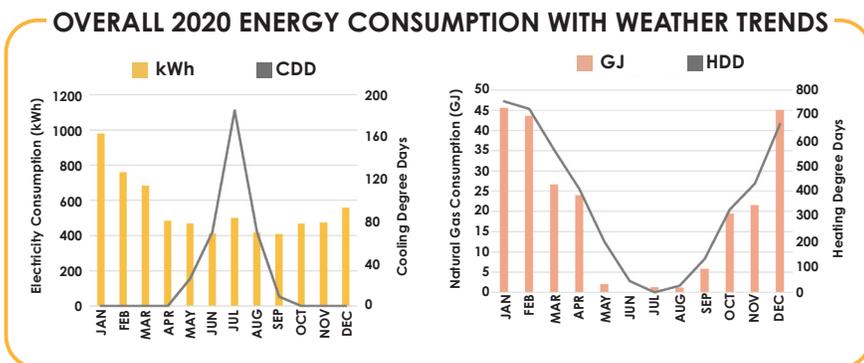
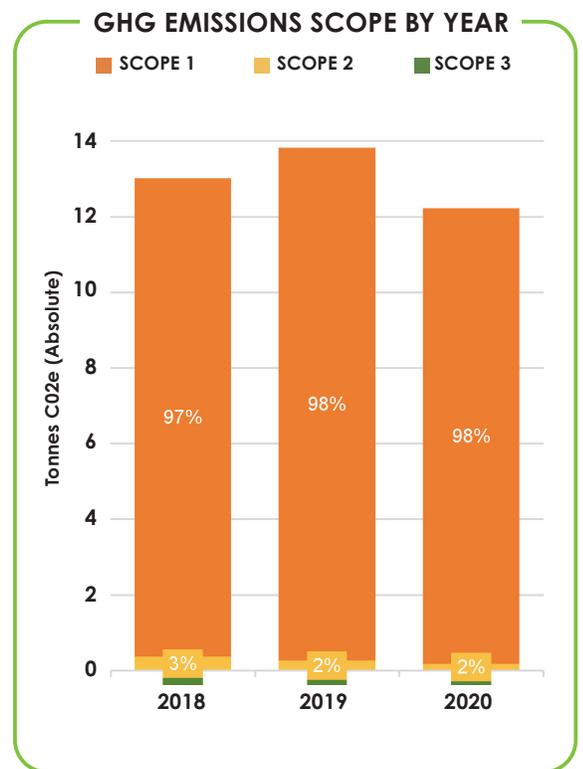
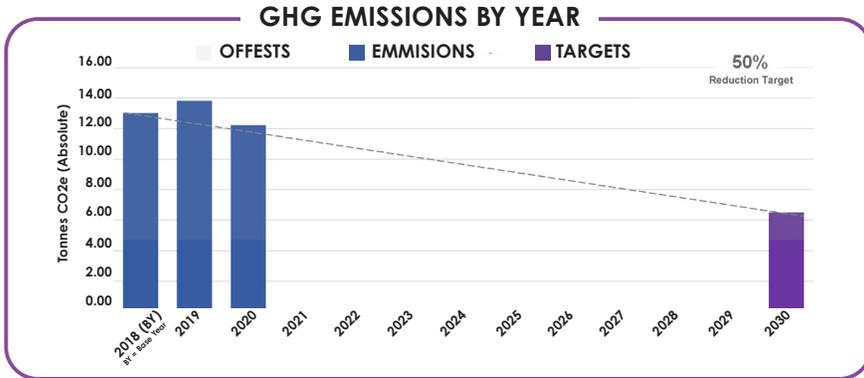
In 2020, the Ottawa Community Foundation (OCF) led the work to establish the Ottawa Climate Action Fund (OCAF), the Ottawa iteration of the Low-Carbon Cities Canada Fund. EnviroCentre's Executive Director was privileged to join a group of local environment and finance experts to contribute to the early formational work of the fund as a member of the initial Advisory Board.



# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

EnviroCentre takes great pride in the individual actions of its staff in reducing our environmental impacts as an organization. We focus on energy, transportation and waste as metrics to track our impact annually in our workspace.

## ENERGY



While EnviroCentre staff shifted to primarily working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, our building still required heat and power to remain operational and allow access to specific staff members for their work, and for personnel working to inspect and prepare the building for sale.

EnviroCentre's GHG emissions footprint from building energy in 2020 was 12.23 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. These emissions from building energy decreased by more than 11% compared to the previous year.

The building sale, and the move to remote work in 2021 will eliminate natural gas and electricity consumption and the resultant GHG emissions associated with the office workspace itself. Initiatives going forward should focus on reducing energy use in staff's home offices, and procuring remote workspaces that have a low GHG impact.

## Commuting

EnviroCentre staff are committed to choosing environmentally-friendly commuting options with a low carbon footprint. In March 2020, our staff switched to working primarily from home, but we collected commuter data for the winter months when we were in the office.

Even during the winter in Ottawa, staff walked or cycled to work more than any other transportation option at 36% of trips, while public transit accounted for another 27% of trips. Staff living further from the office but near one another carpooled a few times per week, and no staff regularly drove solo to the office.

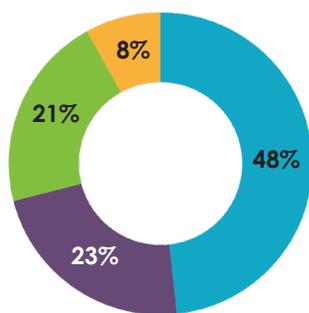
Finally, more than 20% of potential commute trips were avoided by remote working policies we had in place before they became the default following lockdowns. Having processes in place and experience with remote working helped ensure a smooth transition and set us up as a long-term, commute-free workplace.

## Waste Diversion

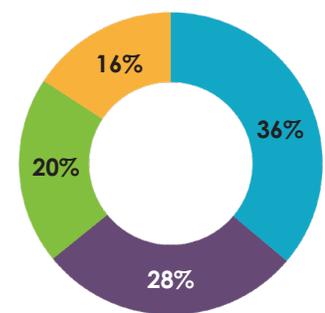
While EnviroCentre’s green team has manually weighed and tracked all 4 major waste streams from our workplace in previous years, the lockdown and distancing protocols that took effect early in 2020 prevented us from continuing to quantify our output. However, with only a small number of staff entering our building on a very limited basis, staff waste production in the office was at a relative minimum.

In 2019, EnviroCentre staff achieved a 93% diversion rate with only 7% of our waste going to landfill and 7% of materials going to plastic/glass/metal recycling. EnviroCentre continued to support staff in making sustainable choices while working remotely in 2020 with green lifestyle resources and tips to promote waste reduction at home. EnviroCentre is proud to boast a staff culture that values individual actions toward this collective goal. We also know that a good share of our office waste was paper towels for hand drying and lunch takeout containers, both of which are likely reduced or eliminated while working from home.

# FINANCIALS



- Energy Programs
- Community Sustainability Programs
- Corporate and Communications
- Other



REVENUES	in thousand \$
Energy Programs	\$964
Community Sustainability Programs	\$454
Corporate and Communications	\$344
Other	\$ 30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,992</b>

EXPENDITURES	in thousand \$
Energy Programs	\$719
Community Sustainability Programs	\$557
Corporate and Communications	\$470
Other	\$242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,988</b>



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