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VISION 2025

Summary Report

EcoVision 2025 presents actions aimed at ensuring a healthy environment and a high quality of life for citizens of the Shediac, Cap-Pelé and Beaubassin-est region.



Prepared by Aster Group Environmental Services Co-op Ltd.

May 2018

Letter from the partners

To the citizens and visitors of our region:

We would like to present EcoVision2025, a collective strategy involving three municipalities and various organizations and community groups. This strategy is an effort to encourage and collaborate on the implementation of actions that aim to ensure a healthy environment and a high quality of life for the citizens of the Shediac and Cap-Pelé region and the rural community of Beaubassin-Est. This community-based initiative employs a tiered approach, with short, medium and long-term actions that represent our commitment to valuing and preserving our resources and our natural areas. It is an indispensable tool that will allow us to reach our environmental objectives while adapting to the effects of climate change.

We, Cap-Pelé, Shediac and the rural community of Beaubassin-est, our partner organizations the Greater Shediac and Cap-Pelé/Beaubassin-est Chambers of Commerce, the Greater Shediac Sewerage Commission, Centre-ville Shediac Downtown Inc., Vision H2O and the Shediac Bay Watershed Association, will strive to work towards implementing relevant actions. We will integrate actions that are relevant into our operations. We are committed to being active partners in the implementation of the EcoVision2025 strategy, and we have identified key personnel that will stay engaged and will report back regularly to our respective organizations. We are committed to supporting the implementation either financially, through logistical or through human resources, to support the project to the best of our ability and capacity.

We would like to thank all those who participated in public consultations, including citizens, stakeholders and the groups and organizations in the region who shared their concerns, their vision and their ideas.

Let's work together towards a healthy environment.

Signed June 4th, 2018

Town of Shediac

Village of Cap-Pelé

Rural Community of Beaubassin-est

Shediac Bay Watershed Association

Vision H2O

Greater Shediac Sewerage Commission

Greater Shediac Chamber of Commerce

Cap-Pelé/Beaubassin-est Chamber of Commerce

Centre-ville Shediac Downtown Inc.

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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2017, concerns over water quality at Parlee Beach Provincial Park and adjacent areas raised awareness in the public about the environmental health in the region of Shediac, Cap-Pelé and the Rural Community of Beaubassin-est. The three municipalities, the Greater Shediac and Cap-Pelé/Beaubassin-est Chambers of Commerce, Centre-ville Shediac Downtown Inc. and the Greater Shediac Sewerage Commission embarked on the development of a region-wide green strategy called EcoVision 2025. The partners worked with the Shediac Bay Watershed Association (SBWA) and Vision H2O (Cap-Pelé and Rural Community of Beaubassin-est watershed group) to develop this strategy, and Aster Group Environmental Services Co-op Ltd. was hired to facilitate the process.

During 7 months in 2017 and 2018, 267 people participated in events, 117 individuals signed up to an e-mail list, and over 16 meetings with stakeholders and municipalities were held. The following vision and goals were developed through this engagement process:

“EcoVision2025 identifies actions that will help ensure a healthy environment that can support economic development, a high quality of life and vibrant communities, all within the reality of a changing climate. Actions are short-, medium-, and long-term, and prioritized into ones that are easy to implement and with a high impact. Lead agencies and/ or organizations are identified and encouraged to become engaged.”

Goals:

1. To protect and improve water quality in our freshwater and coastal environments, and to promote water conservation.
2. To conserve and enhance the natural environment and ensure natural systems are healthy and resilient, and to restore and protect our coastline and wetlands.
3. To reduce carbon emissions by maximizing energy efficiency and moving forward with the transition to renewable energy.
4. To reduce the amount of waste we generate, and support and promote the 5 R's (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle), and to engage the public in more advanced waste management strategies that protect our environment.
5. To support a productive agricultural industry that protects our water resources, and to support local food systems and promote the consumption of local food to residents and tourists.
6. To implement, support and promote efficient, active and shared transportation systems.
7. To adapt to a changing climate and to increase our resiliency in the face of change.

Introduction

The region is primarily rural and well-known for its tourist attractions including Parlee Beach Provincial Park and Aboiteau Beach. The coastline is well-developed and pressures exist for continued development along the coastal areas, while the low-lying region faces the impacts from a changing climate such as sea level rise, erosion and increased storm surge activities. In the summer of 2017, concerns over water quality at Parlee Beach Provincial Park and adjacent areas raised awareness in the public about the environmental health in the region of Shediac, Cap-Pelé and the Rural Community of Beaubassin-est. The three municipalities, the Greater Shediac and Cap-Pelé/Beaubassin-est Chambers of Commerce, Centre-ville Shediac Downtown Inc. and the Greater Shediac Sewerage Commission embarked on the development of a region-wide green strategy called EcoVision 2025. The partners worked with the Shediac Bay Watershed Association (SBWA) and Vision H2O (Cap-Pelé and Rural Community of Beaubassin-est watershed group) to develop this strategy, and Aster Group Environmental Services Co-op Ltd. was hired to facilitate the process. The goal for this strategy was to identify environmental initiatives and actions that could improve the environmental health in the region, with a focus on educating and raising environmental awareness in the public and the thousands of tourists who flock to the region each year.

The decision was made to present the “strategy” in an online format to allow for transparency and for easy updating. The importance of transparency and accountability was highlighted throughout the engagement process as critically important. As a result, this summary report does not duplicate the online strategy, but it does contain a description of the engagement process, and our recommendations on next steps to ensure that work continues with the following vision:

“EcoVision2025 identifies actions that will help ensure a healthy environment that can support economic development, a high quality of life and vibrant communities, all within the reality of a changing climate. Actions are short-, medium-, and long-term, and prioritized into ones that are easy to implement and with a high impact. Lead agencies and/ or organizations are identified and encouraged to become engaged.”

Engagement Process

During the months of October 2017 through April 2018, Aster Group organized 2 public surveys (>128 participants), 3 public meetings (>72 participants), and 4 focus group meetings (>67 participants) and participated in an Open House in Shediac. In addition, sixteen meetings with stakeholders and organizations were organized, as well as 6 meetings with municipal representatives. A project website and Facebook page were kept updated, and notes and records from meetings were uploaded as they became available to ensure transparency. A number of stakeholders also met to discuss the education and outreach actions specifically, and to provide input into the website. At the beginning of the process, 13,000 copies of an information sheet were mailed to households in the region to invite broad participation. Contact information was provided, and by April 2018, 117 individuals had signed up to an e-mail list.

Goals & Actions

Throughout the engagement process, first environmental concerns, and then ideas for actions to address those concerns were compiled. These actions are presented on the website (ecovision2025.ca). They are presented under 6 themes, with an overarching goal identified for each of them. All education and outreach actions associated with all of these themes were compiled into a separate list.

The goals for each theme are listed below:

1. To protect and improve water quality in our freshwater and coastal environments, and to promote water conservation.
Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards the elimination of all raw sewage and contaminated runoff entering waters through better sewage treatment, the implementation and enforcement of septic system and boat holding tank mandatory pump outs, and the education of tourists and the public.
2. To conserve and enhance the natural environment and ensure natural systems are healthy and resilient, and to restore and protect our coastline and wetlands.
Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards the protection and rehabilitation of existing natural ecosystems such as wetlands and the coastal zone (beaches, salt marshes, etc.), strong buffers to those ecosystems, and education of the public about the importance of natural areas such as wetlands and the coastal zone.
3. To reduce carbon emissions by maximizing energy efficiency and moving forward with the transition to renewable energy.
Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards increasing the energy efficiency of municipal buildings, businesses and private homes, and increasing the use of all renewable energy technologies.
4. To reduce the amount of waste we generate, and support and promote the 5 R's (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle), and to engage the public in more advanced waste management strategies that protect our environment.
Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards the implementation of waste separation for businesses, apartment buildings and municipal operations, and educate the public and tourists on how our waste management system works and why we need to reduce our waste.
5. To support a productive agricultural industry that protects our water resources, and to support local food systems and promote the consumption of local food to residents and tourists.

Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards the growing and use of local food in schools, businesses, and the public, and the promotion of local food products to tourists and the public.

6. To implement, support and promote efficient, active and shared transportation systems.

Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards better active transportation opportunities such as trails, efficient cars, and shared as well as public transportation services.

7. To adapt to a changing climate and to increase our resiliency in the face of change.

Actions that will have the greatest impact and will achieve the above goal are those that work towards reducing risks from climate impact such as restricting and regulating development in risk zones as identified by the provincial government, encouraging those that live in risk zones to move or improve their buildings so that they can withstand risk better and to plan for retreat in the long-term.

Next Steps & Recommendations

Of particular interest to participants was the need to maintain momentum, communication and engagement, as well as transparency. The partners have identified the mechanism by which they will engage with others to work on implementing the actions, and we strongly recommend that implementation of this mechanism begins without delay to keep stakeholders and partners engaged. Three actions were not part of a specific theme and include: to undertake a community asset mapping exercise (human and natural); to develop an environmental charter for the region for people to sign on to; and to develop a business certification program. Since the certification program is of particular interest to a number of partners, it forms part of the recommendations below. These recommendations reflect what we heard throughout the 8-month engagement process.

1. Municipalities and partner organizations need to commit to implementing actions that will improve the environmental health in the region.
2. It is strongly recommended that the three municipalities hire a coordinator for at least one year to ensure that work commences towards implementing this strategy.
3. There needs to be continued engagement by all municipalities and partner organizations, and this engagement must be transparent, honest and respectful.
4. Each organization and municipality will need to identify key personnel who will be the contact person(s) for the implementation; this information will be posted on the website (ecovision2025.ca).
5. Municipalities will need to commit to providing sufficient funding to ensure continued engagement around the implementation of actions; this funding should be sufficient to support secretariat functions at partner organizations (Shediac Bay Watershed Association and Vision H2O).
6. Municipalities should strive to integrate goals and actions from EcoVision2025 into their municipalities' operations, as much as possible.

7. Municipalities should communicate regularly with their citizens to keep them updated on actions being implemented towards achieving a healthier environment as outlined in EcoVision2025 (*ecovision2025.ca*).
8. The implementation of the actions as outlined in EcoVision2025 will be up to each partner and should be supported through a collaborative networking process that is open and transparent to all partners and the public.
9. It is recommended that additional partners will be engaged along the way, such as provincial government departments and other local and regional organizations.
10. Actions, and the goals under each theme, should be reviewed at on an annual basis.
11. It is recommended to develop an EcoVision2025 certification program: ideas for this program are presented in Appendix 1, and we strongly recommend its implementation within 1 to 2 years. It will function to educate the public, tourists and businesses, as well as, act as a marketing tool for EcoVision2025.

Marketing & Communication

General

Promotion of the EcoVision2025 initiative will depend on the engagement of the partner organizations. Municipalities and partners are encouraged to link to the EcoVision2025 website as soon as possible. The website (*ecovision2025.ca*) is the primary communication and marketing tool. The education actions on the website identify topics and tools, as well as audiences that need to be reached on each topic participants have identified. A rack card has been developed and can be printed immediately to be placed in locations across the regions (Appendix 1 a). A brochure (Appendix 1 b), and a poster template (Appendix 1 c) are also available for use.

A certification program as proposed here will be a valuable marketing tool while at the same time providing educational opportunities across the region.

EcoVision2025 Certification Program

A certification program could be implemented for the region to recognize organizations, businesses and industries that want to or already are reducing their impact on the environment. A certification program should be led and developed by the Chamber(s) of Commerce(s) in collaboration with organizations that can support its development. Through such a program, businesses can show that they lead by example, while promoting the local economy. For tourist and residents, this would be a symbol that indicates which businesses have green practices in place. Below are recommendations on how to develop such a program (timeline: 6 months development, 6 months implementation):

- Compliance with the program is proposed to be voluntary, without enforcement. It should rely on peer pressure; the region is small enough for this to work effectively.

- Businesses and organizations will complete a specified number of actions, and they are also required to communicate to the public regarding their actions (why, what impact, how; through, e.g., fact sheets)
- The actions developed for the website (“what I can do”) can be used as a basis for developing the actions for the certification program (Appendix 2).
- To develop the program, a survey of businesses can be undertaken to see where they are at in terms of environmental actions towards sustainability.
- Hire an individual to carry out research on other programs; which actions to use, differences among sectors, how to promote and strategies to implement.
- Raise funds (at least 30,000) to develop the program, most of this would be used to hire an individual to work with partners; some funds are required for promotional material.
- Most of the promotion and certification information could be web-based and added to the EcoVision2025 website.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 a) Rack card



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Actions to ensure a healthy environment and a high quality of life for citizens of the Shediac, Cap-Pelé and Beaubassin-Est region.

      

EcoVision2025 identifies actions that will help ensure a healthy environment that can support economic development, a high quality of life and vibrant communities, all within the reality of a changing climate. Actions are short-, medium-, and long-term, and prioritized into ones that are easy to implement and with a high impact. Lead agencies and/or organizations are identified and encouraged to become engaged.

ecovision2025.ca
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Actions to ensure a healthy environment and a high quality of life for citizens of the Shediac, Cap-Pelé and Beaubassin-Est region.

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Goals

- 1 To protect and improve water quality in our freshwater and coastal environments, and to promote water conservation.
- 2 To conserve and enhance the natural environment and ensure natural systems are healthy and resilient, and to restore and protect our coastline and wetlands.
- 3 To reduce carbon emissions by maximizing energy efficiency and moving forward with the transition to renewable energy.
- 4 To reduce the amount of waste we generate, and support and promote the 5 R's (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle), and to engage the public in more advanced waste management strategies that protect our environment.
- 5 To support a productive agricultural industry that protects our water resources, and to support local food systems and promote the consumption of local food to residents and tourists.
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Appendix 1 c) Poster template



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Appendix 2

Information for an EcoVision2025 Certification Program

a) Helpful websites:

<http://www.gbcertified.ca/index.html>

<https://greenbusinessbureau.com/>

<https://canadabusiness.ca/managing-your-business/day-to-day-operations/environment-and-business/resources-for-greening-your-business/>

<http://www.vigbc.ca/>

<http://www.greentourismcanada.ca/>

b) Actions that could be included in a certification program:

(Note: these actions are a portion of the actions on the EcoVision2025 website; others would need to be added specifically for businesses and industries, and the ones below would have to be edited and adjusted).

We use low-flow showerheads to reduce water consumption.

(Low-flow showerheads reduce your water consumption by 11 L per minute.)

We shower for 4 minutes or less.

(If you reduce your showering time from 7 minutes to only 4 minutes, you save about 60 L each time.)

We fix leaky faucets.

(Leaky taps can waste 300 gallons a year.)

Our toilet water tank has two flushing options.

(This cuts water use in half.)

We have a composting toilet.

(Composting toilets require no water at all and keep nutrients and pollutants out of waterways.)

We separate our garbage into recyclables, compost, and landfill garbage bags.

(By separating out recyclables you help put reusable material back in the cycle, reducing the need for new resources. Details on how to separate in this region can be found here:

<https://www.eco360.ca/residential-program.>*)*

We take our waste to where it can be disposed of properly and recycled.

(Things like paint, fluorescent bulbs and batteries or other household hazardous waste can be brought to the mobile eco-depot or various drop-off sites in southeastern NB.)

We participate in shoreline and beach cleanups.
(By 2050, it is estimated there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish. Every piece of plastic removed from shorelines and beaches can make a difference.)

We use reusable coffee mugs and water bottles.
(Every year Canadians use over 5 billion single-use coffee cups and water bottles.)

We skip the straw.
(Straws are nearly impossible to recycle. Ask restaurants and bars to omit the straw when they bring you your drink.)

We buy locally produced food when possible (e.g., from the market).
(Local food has a reduced impact on the environment because it doesn't have to travel thousands of kilometers to get to you. It also supports your local economy.)

We buy organic food.
(It's a way of growing and processing food that is both environmentally and animal friendly.)

We try to eat food that is mostly in season.
(By eating what's growing in your area right now, you're eating locally and supporting the farmers in your area.)

We don't use pesticides on our property.
(Pesticides can leech into your water, contaminate your soil, and get into the food chain.)

We buy sustainably caught or farmed fish.
(Some fishing practices harm the environment and other species. Look for Marine Stewardship Council certified seafood.)

We maintain as many trees as possible on our property.
(This can provide great habitat for local wildlife, making your property a safe-haven for a variety of species.)

We keep plants along streams, wetlands, and beaches, as buffers.
(Vegetation helps control erosion and ensures that these ecosystems remain healthy and protect your property from flooding.)

We construct and put up birdhouses.
(Attracting birds to your yard will not only provide entertainment but will also help to control insects.)

We have garden plants that attract bees and butterflies.
(Many species of bees are in severe decline across the world. One way to help is to provide some of the plants they need for food. Having bees and butterflies around will also help your garden because they pollinate your plants!)

We don't have a large lawn area, but keep our yard "wild" for wildlife.
(This helps by creating a wider range of habitats for all kinds of different species.)

We have replaced all our lightbulbs with LED lights.
(LED lights use up to 80% less energy and last longer than regular lightbulbs.)

We turn off equipment that may draw electricity despite it not being in use.
(Many appliances and electronics continue to draw electricity even when they're turned off. It's best to unplug them.)

We use some form of renewable energy (PVC, solar hot water, wind, etc.).
(This reduces your reliance on fossil fuels and your contribution to climate change.)

We have insulated our building(s).
(Sealing gaps and cracks can reduce your home's heat loss by 10% and cut down on your energy bill.)

We turn off the lights when we leave a room.
(This easy action saves money and energy.)

We have changed our appliances to energy efficient ones.
(Keep an eye out for the ENERGY STAR label.)

We own and use an electric vehicle.
(An electric vehicle costs about \$421 to fuel per year, compared to a gasoline-only car's \$1500 (USD).)

We own and use a hybrid vehicle.
(These usually use half as much fuel as a regular vehicle.)

We car-pool whenever possible.
(Why use four cars with one person each, when you can fit four people in one car?)

We do not idle at traffic lights, or when stopping for any length of time.
(Ten seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting your car.)

We capture all water runoff from our property.
(This reduces the amount of water municipal infrastructures needs to deal with.)

We have reduced impermeable surfaces by removing asphalt.
(This allows water to be absorbed by the soil and reduces runoff.)