



Miistakis
Institute

Proposed Target- setting Process for the CRP Regional EcoPlan

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Introduction

The CRP Regional EcoPlan

Development of the *Calgary Regional Partnership Ecological Conservation and Protection Plan* (or *CRP Regional EcoPlan*) began in the spring of 2015. The purpose of the EcoPlan was to create an “implementation” plan for the Calgary Metropolitan Plan’s (CMP’s) first principle: Protecting the natural environment and watershed. High-level goals for this were articulated in the CMP, but the EcoPlan was conceived to be a practical, measurable plan for the on-going protection of the ecological features and functions on which the citizens of the Calgary Region depend for their physical, economic and social well-being.

The EcoPlan was framed around a step-wise process whereby it would articulate a set of conservation and protection **themes and measures**, set **effective and achievable targets** around the themes, identify **specific actions** that can be taken by the CRP and its members at both the regional and local level to achieve those targets, and **integrate** directly with the CMP’s Principle 1.

Measurement of the EcoPlan Themes and Sub-themes

Each theme was created with specific reference to how it could be measured. Measures were intended to balance being “data-doable” (i.e., we have the data, models, expertise and/or information needed to actually pursue that measure), and not just measuring because it was “data-dictated” (i.e., the mere existence of a dataset dictates that it is an important measure).

Measures were based on a Miistakis analysis, consultation with the CRP GIS Committee, and review of municipal efforts.

Target-setting for the EcoPlan

The CRP EcoPlan is built around five conservation and protection themes, and 16 sub-themes. The EcoPlan will require setting targets for each of these themes/sub-themes, which the CRP members will work towards together. The Partnership will monitor progress towards these targets, and that progress will be reported back.

While actually setting these targets is the basis of the next project phase, the scope of this phase included creating and proposing an effective *target-setting process*.

To guide the development of the target-setting process, a vision statement was articulated:

"By having CRP EcoPlan Targets, the Region and its stakeholders will have a common set of goals and targets for achieving the CMP Principle 1, based on a common starting point and supported by data."

The work, then, was to articulate an effective, achievable process for the CRP to set targets around the EcoPlan themes, with specific consideration of:

- Potential types and characteristics of targets
- How best to engage the CRP partnership
- Key attributes of target progress reporting
- Issues and barriers that need to be addressed
- Potential models for target-setting
- Budget constraints for the both setting and monitoring targets
- Implementation roles of various players

Target-setting Process Research

To inform the development of the target-setting process, several background steps were undertaken.

First, Miistakis researched several target-setting processes based on the articulated criteria. Examples and models from both within and without the environmental sector were explored. Key characteristics, proven approaches, common issues, process models, required roles, and local applicability were all explored. A summary document of the research was prepared.

Second, a workshop session was held in November, 2016. Miistakis staff and CRP staff came together to work through the models and information that had been gathered, and a basic approach was developed. Based on this, Miistakis developed a proposed target-setting approach, which was taken before the CRP's Calgary Metropolitan Plan and Regional Servicing Steering Committee (the "Steering Committee") in December, 2016. The Steering Committee reviewed the proposed approach and engaged in a facilitated workshopping session to refine it further.

The final version is presented in this document, as the proposed 'go-forward' approach.

Proposed Target Types and Process Characteristics

Conceptually, the idea of setting targets and then pursuing them is straightforward. However, two question areas immediately arise. The first is, "What does a target look like? What kinds of targets are there?" The second is around what characteristics the *process* should have.

To address the first question area, the proposed target-setting approach proposes five target types or dichotomies to guide the process:

- 'Conservation' versus 'Process' targets
 - Conservation: Setting targets based on the actual ecological feature (e.g., 'conserve X acres of wetlands')
 - Process: Setting targets based on the process (e.g., 'all member municipalities have a wetland conservation policy')
- Ecological targets
 - Targets based directly on a measure of the ecological function or health of the theme
- Action/practices
 - Targets that are about generating a certain level of activity or type of behaviour (direct land conservation, reduced water use, land use practices)
- Policy
 - Targets that are intended to catalyze policy creation, standardization, revision (plans, policies, bylaws, etc.)
- Information/learning
 - Targets that are about filling information or knowledge gaps that are currently a barrier to achieving conservation (studies, monitoring, data collection)

To address the second question area, the resources and EcoPlan activities to date were reviewed to come up with a list of characteristics that would define *how* the target-setting process should proceed. The primary considerations were the need to be:

- As inclusive as possible of all member municipalities and critical stakeholders;
- Conscious of budget / resource constraints for member municipalities;
- Include content experts (i.e., include people with an *ecological systems* focus)
- Practical (i.e., include people with a *pragmatic municipal* focus);
- Informed by best available information and data;
- Be applicable at the local and regional level
- Leery of one-size-fits-all targets;
- Efficient by selecting only the minimum targets necessary to meet the goal; and
- Clear on roles and responsibilities.

Proposed Target-setting Process

Based on the needs and characteristics described above (and the background review undertaken by the Miistakis Institute), a proposed target-setting process was developed.

There are six steps to the process:

- 1. Develop Suite of Draft Targets by Sub-theme
- 2. Check in with all CRP Municipal Partners
- 3. Analysis of Draft Targets
- 4. Revision of Draft Targets
- 5. Synthesizing Workshop
- 6. Finalization of Targets

Step 1: Develop Suite of Draft Targets by Sub-theme

The first step would involve the Miistakis Institute developing a draft set of targets in conjunction with the CRP staff. Draft targets would be developed for each sub-theme, and consideration would be given to targets that would be applicable at the regional level, municipal level generally, and then by specific municipality. Each draft target would also include proposed reporting protocols.

The team would draw in context experts as required by each sub-theme, who would advise on the effectiveness of the targets from an ecological conservation perspective (i.e., would reaching that target actually achieve the conservation goal).

The team would also work with member municipality personnel, drawing on both their expertise regarding municipal capabilities, but also from existing target-setting work undertaken by municipalities in the region.

The draft targets would be presented to the Steering Committee for interim sign-off and recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Step 2: Check in with all CRP Municipal Partners

Several different approaches to engaging the municipal partners were considered, but in the end it was determined that a direct, municipality-specific discussion would be required, despite the cost implications.

In this step, a meeting would take place with each member municipality. In advance, they would be given the draft targets and the opportunity to review them. Each municipality would then identify the appropriate staff, council, stakeholders to be part of the meeting.

At each municipality meeting, the targets for all 16 sub-themes would be tested, with the opportunity for the member municipality to question the target, and give feedback as to how each one would affect them.

Step 3: Analysis of Draft Targets

After meeting and reviewing the draft targets with each member municipality, the Miistakis Institute would conduct an analysis of the feedback. The analysis would focus on where there was agreement, where there were shortcomings, and where priority adjustments would address issues, but maintain support for Principle 1.

It is highly unlikely this analysis will find a large degree of unanimity, and there is likely to be a significant amount of effort to erode the targets. In the end, the analysis will have to assess to what degree modifications can be made while still accomplishing the overall regional conservation goals with each theme and sub-theme.

The analysis would be presented to the Steering Committee for review, and feedback.

Step 4: Revision of Draft Targets

The analysis of the draft targets will likely yield areas where the targets need to be modified. This step will start by identifying the key issues with regard to draft targets. In cases where solutions are not immediately apparent, additional background research / discussion necessary to support revisions will be undertaken.

After the analysis and additional research, the draft targets will be adjusted, and a revised suite of targets created. This new suite of targets (still in draft form) would be presented to the Steering Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Step 5: Synthesizing Workshop

At this stage, the CRP partners need to come together and work together to synthesize and finalize the targets. A Synthesizing Workshop would be convened, with representation from all municipalities, and all levels of personnel.

The goal of this workshop will NOT be to re-open and re-debate the targets, although some refinement will likely occur. Instead the focus will be on how to work together as a region of municipal partners to achieve the targets.

Potential topics of discussion include:

- Using the strategies catalogue
- How targets should be tracked / monitored
- How reporting should happen
- Opportunities for collaboration / coordination
- How to create a regional picture

Step 6: Finalization of Targets

The final step in the target-setting process will be finalize the targets. This will begin with a final round of revisions based on refinements that may have arise in the

Synthesizing Workshop. One complete, those targets will move forward for approval.

The final suite of targets will be presented to the Steering Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee. The targets will then be taken forward to approval at the Executive Committee.

Conclusion

The finalization of the targets is not completion, only agreement on a destination. The next stage of the CRP EcoPlan project will be Implementation, but the hope is that member municipalities will have well set up for that next step by having been engaged extensively and individually in advance.