

Town of Aurora Community Energy Plan

Stakeholder Working Group Meeting #5

September 24, 2020, 1:00pm to 3:30pm

Introduction

The Town of Aurora is developing a Community Energy Plan (CEP) – a comprehensive long-term plan to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas production. The CEP will result in a plan that fosters a culture of conservation, considers the impacts of future growth and options for local clean energy generation and supports economic development by better meeting local energy needs.

The Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) provides an ongoing mechanism for input and advice to the Project Team on key points in the development of the CEP.

Session Objectives

The fifth and final SWG meeting was held on September 24th, 2020. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Present final vision and goals for the CEP;
- Present and accept feedback on high-level refined strategies;
- Confirm GHG reduction targets and wording;
- Discuss implementation considerations; and
- Discuss additional items and answer questions as necessary.

Presentation

The meeting began with welcome remarks by Natalie Kehle, Town of Aurora, and Susan Hall, LURA Consulting. Susan provided a brief review of the project objectives, reviewed the highlights from the fourth SWG Meeting, and reviewed feedback from members of the public (collected through an online survey) and internal staff (collected through internal review). Susan presented the approved vision statement and associated goals.

- **Approved Vision:** Aurora is a leader in energy and emissions reduction, with a focus on improving quality of life in collaboration with residents, organizations and businesses.
- **Approved Goals:**

Topic	Goal
Behaviour Change, Education and Awareness	Educate and communicate with the public about the impact of energy choices.
Commercial and Industrial Conservation & Efficiency	Encourage local businesses and industries to use energy consciously and increase efficiency.
Economic Development	Support the local economy.
Energy Generation and Distribution	Increase access to clean and renewable energy in the community.

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Topic	Goal
Land Use	Encourage healthy and complete communities for residents to live, work and play through land-use planning.
Residential Conservation & Efficiency	Encourage homes and apartments to use energy consciously and increase efficiency.
Transportation Efficiency	Support a range of low carbon transportation options that are accessible, including electric vehicles, public transit, walking and cycling.
Natural Environment	Integrate nature-based solutions in land use to capture carbon.
Waste	Support waste reduction efforts at the local and regional level.

Caitlin Rodger, ICLEI Canada, reviewed the total emissions reductions both cumulatively and associated with each strategy. In total, the current strategies will achieve a 28% GHG reduction by 2030 and a 63% reduction by 2050. Caitlin provided an update on the changes that have been made to the strategy modelling in response to previous SWG comments.

Discussion – Targets & Wording

Susan acknowledged the gap between current strategies (a 28% GHG reduction by 2030 and a 63% reduction by 2050) and the plan's overall target (a 30% GHG reduction by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050). Caitlin noted that a “net-zero community” is often defined as an 80% reduction in emissions.

It was suggested that the final CEP include the actual reduction values from the current strategies, and **state that the CEP is “on the path to a reduction of 30% by 2030 and 80% by 2050”, acknowledging that there is a gap.** Over time, the Town will look for ways to close this gap through activities such as quantification of carbon sequestration in the natural environment and evaluating emerging technologies. The majority of participants were supportive of this approach and the associated wording, with 81% of participants indicating support via a poll.

Key discussion points included:

- The CEP should clearly articulate the level of effort required to achieve these targets. Communication will be important.
- The CEP should clearly articulate what is needed at higher levels of government to support the Town in meeting its targets.

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- Encourage local energy technology development to address the gap.
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is looking into quantifying carbon sequestration values within the Town of Aurora.

Discussion - Strategies

Susan and Caitlin provided a review of the proposed CEP strategies. Participants were asked to provide any final feedback. Overall, the strategies were supported by SWG members, with some modifications to the participation rates and applications. The following section provides a summary of the feedback received. This feedback will be used to refine the strategies.

Renewables: Solar

- Participants questioned whether there was sufficient land and roof space to accommodate the levels of adoption specified in the strategy.
- The consultant team will investigate this further before finalizing the CEP.
- Land and roof space availability analysis is typically assessed during the feasibility study.

Residential Buildings

- Participants discussed the implications of including heritage homes within retrofit programs. Members confirmed that energy upgrades are possible for designed properties as designation focuses on exterior street-facing aspects.
- Natalie reiterated that further details would be developed during the design of the residential retrofit program. This would be a separate process; the CEP is a high-level strategy document.
- Participants noted that there is a high-level of adoption needed to achieve the retrofit goals which focuses on individual homeowners.
- The project team acknowledged that the rates of adoption are high but needed to reach the targets discussed above. Participants were reminded that a significant shift is required in how we do business.
- Supports are expected from local utilities and higher levels of government.

Discussion – Implementation Planning

Susan reviewed a list of implementation considerations including financing, engagement and communications, reporting, renewal, enabling components and potential partners. Natalie reviewed the potential structure of the municipal-led Implementation Working Group.

Participants discussed implementation considerations. Key discussion points included:

- Adding additional organizations to the list of potential partners.
- The importance of the Town to take on an advocacy role with higher levels of government.
- A suggestion for the CEP to identify priority projects to assist with implementation planning.
- Cautioning against “meeting overload”; focus on implementation, not administration.

Overall, 94% of SWG members were supportive of the implementation planning recommendations.

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Next Steps

Natalie and Susan thanked participants for their time and contributions. This is the final meeting for the SWG. SWG members will be invited for high-level comments on the draft CEP in November 2020. The CEP is anticipated to be presented to Council in early 2021.

Please share – our virtual open house will be “live” in early October through Engage Aurora <https://engageaurora.ca/cep>