

Context:

- There is currently no mechanism to ensure that a Community Energy Plan (CEP) can get from the planning stage to the implementation stage amidst political change.
- Ideally, community energy planning should become as routine for municipalities as waste management planning is currently.
- Therefore, there is a need for the Provincial government to provide the necessary legislative and policy support for such initiatives.

Recommendation:

- Continue to support the review of the Provincial Growth Plan, Provincial Policy Statement, the Planning Act and any other Provincial policy or regulation to encourage local Municipal Energy Planning;
- Include specific language that supports community energy planning in the Provincial Growth Plan, Provincial Policy Statement and the Planning Act as part of the municipal growth management & planning process;
- Continue to support the development and implementation of community energy plans through the Municipal Energy Plan (MEP) program; and
- Support knowledge sharing of community energy planning best-practices to assist those municipalities interested in developing community energy plans.

Background:

- Numerous municipalities across Ontario and Canada (170 and counting representing over 50% of the population) have adopted community energy plans as a strategy to manage energy demand (see Ontario examples below).
- Examples include energy efficiency and the Ontario Building Code, the provisions of Region transit systems/connections, and the priorities outlined in the Province’s Long Term Energy Plan.
- However, an increasing number of municipalities in Ontario are realizing the importance of integrating energy into their planning processes by developing a CEP.
- For that reason municipalities rely on senior levels of government to take actions that support energy planning at the municipal level.

What is Community Energy Planning?

Community energy planning offers a relatively new and more effective approach to creating Smart Energy Communities by integrating energy-related practices across land use, buildings,

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transportation, water, waste and related infrastructure in order to maximize long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.

This integrated approach to community-based planning presents a unique opportunity to better manage energy in a community and in the province as a whole. In recent years, community energy planning has received increasing support and recognition from bodies such as the OPA and the provincial government in response to a pressing need for municipalities to re-evaluate their energy planning practices.

The Ministry of Energy recently released the second iteration of their Municipal Energy Plan program, which will give municipalities well needed funding to develop and implement a Community Energy Plan. The QUEST Ontario Municipal Working Group, composed of leading municipalities in the community energy planning file, agree that this funding and other supportive policies are necessary to open the door to the proliferation of locally-driven energy plans.

In summation, community energy planning leads to an affordable energy future, local development opportunities, empowerment for municipalities over their energy planning, resilient and reliable energy systems and increased energy capacity. However, support for this process must be formalized in policy and legislation in order to ensure its continued success.

Active Community Energy Plans in Ontario:

- **Burlington:** The City of Burlington's Community Energy Plan, approved by Council in January 2014, is a 20 year plan that will leverage the process of urban intensification to curb the growth in energy consumption, and to proactively drive efficiencies. The plan expects that by 2030, Burlington will see a 27% reduction in energy consumption and a 26% reduction in GHG emissions.
- **East Gwillimbury:** the Town of East Gwillimbury adopted its municipal-wide Community Energy Plan in 2009 as part of the larger Growth Management and Official Plan review process to accommodate exponential population growth outlined in the "Places to Grow" Provincial Growth Plan
- **Guelph:** In 2004, the City of Guelph formed a Consortium to proactively develop a Community Energy Plan. The Plan was formalized in 2006 and is being used to guide the City's energy future, meet growth expectations and attract investment through competitive energy, water and transportation services.
- **London:** The City of London's Community Energy Action Plan, approved by Council in July 2014, sets out short-term (2014/15) and medium-term (2018) goals to increase the local economic benefit achieved through sustainable energy use, and to reduce the environmental impact associated with local energy use.
- **Markham:** The City of Markham's District Energy system is part of its strategy to protect the well-being of the community and place Markham as a leader in energy efficiency and conservation demand management. The system serves the City's emerging

downtown core, providing local thermal energy for the heating and cooling of buildings. There are currently two plants in operation, with a third underway.

- **Sault Ste. Marie:** Recently the municipality released its Smart Energy Strategy, which it hopes will position it as a viable jurisdiction for investment and growth in energy projects. It is projected that this initiative will lead to 300-600 local jobs and power 300,000 to 600,000 homes through alternative energy projects. In 2008, the City set the bold goal of being recognized as the “Alternative Energy Capital of North America”.
- **Toronto:** Toronto’s Sustainable Energy Plan addresses Toronto’s energy needs on a short, medium and long term timeframe in a way that increases energy security, reliability and affordability while reducing the outflow of energy dollars from the local economy. The energy sustainability targets of this initiative are closely linked to the City’s efforts to reduce GHG emissions, thereby improving air quality and meeting climate change goals.

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