

Council of Canadians, Hamilton Chapter
General Issues Committee Presentation

Monday, February 8, 2021, 3 p.m.

On behalf of the Hamilton chapter of the Council of Canadians, we ask that Council consider a strategy by which the City can meet the climate emergency and at the same time save money and create local jobs. This can be done by expanding the local installation of renewable energy sources, specifically solar panels placed on municipal buildings.

Cities are starting to realize that the shift to renewable energy can be a huge financial boon for the municipality. All monies spent on gas and oil leave Ontario. This is a powerful argument for Hamilton to generate renewable energy right here. The money stays in the community, especially if it is small scale energy production such as solar panels on homes, businesses and municipally owned buildings. This generates local jobs that pay well and likely will mean more taxes collected by the municipality.

Given that Hamilton is examining a new Community Energy Plan for the City, there is an opportunity here to expand local solar power energy production. For example, the City can suggest and provide subsidies for the installation of solar panels or solar water heating systems in new buildings, both municipal and private.

Another opportunity presents itself in regards to the municipal facilities roof replacement program. Given that the City is looking at the replacement of a number of facility roofs over the next few years, it would be possible to plan for the addition of solar panels on these roofs. Structural roofing upgrades may not be necessary as lower-weight panels are now a definite option.

Many communities **are** already taking significant steps towards local renewable power generation. Here are a few examples with accompanying links to municipal websites.

Halifax:

Green Municipal Fund

- “Between 2008 and by 2011 the City of Halifax reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 10,000 tonnes per year through a combination of energy efficiency retrofits and more efficient building designs.”

“In 2009, the city created a sustainable building fund to redirect energy cost savings from these initiatives toward funding for future projects. Since then, the fund's annual energy savings deposits have grown from \$350,000 to over \$750,000 and have helped to finance millions of dollars' worth of energy upgrades, including those undertaken through the city's Solar City initiative.

<https://www.halifax.ca/home-property/solar-projects/about-solar-city-halifax>

Red Deer: Community Generation Capacity Building Program

Alberta implemented a Micro-Generation program for individuals and small business, which is off the grid, and a Community Generation where energy is sold back to the grid

- Red Deer College has surged beyond its own goals for renewable energy by installing a 1.6-megawatt [solar system](#), the largest on any post-secondary institution in Canada.

<https://mccac.ca/programs/community-generation-capacity-building-program/>

Kingston:

Since April 2004, energy savings from assessing and rating large municipal building and retrofit projects, the city has implemented a system called 'net metering'.

- "Net metering allows the City to send electricity generated from Renewable Energy Technologies...for a credit, reducing our electricity costs. Excess generation credits can be carried forward for a consecutive 12-month period to offset future electricity costs. The goal is to over-generate during the summer months and use up the excess credits during the winter months."

<https://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/environment-sustainability/climate-change-energy/climate-action-plan/toolkit/renewables>

Toronto

- [TransformTO](#), Toronto's climate action strategy identifies several key goals, including that 75 per cent of energy must come from renewable or low carbon sources by 2050.

High Performance New Construction Program

- Buildings generate about half of the greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto today. Through its [High Performance New Construction Program](#), the City offers incentives to help building owners and design/decision-makers make buildings more energy efficient.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/toronto-green-standard/>

Vancouver

- "...Under Vancouver's Zero Emissions Building Plan for new construction, approximately 40% of buildings existing today will be replaced with new buildings by 2050. Specifically:

...Similar to Vancouver's approach for new buildings, we will set annual carbon pollution limits for most existing buildings that decrease over time. This regulatory approach provides

a clear signal for trades to invest in training, suppliers to begin sourcing needed systems, and for building owners to start long-term planning toward zero emissions.

<https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/vancouvers-climate-emergency.aspx>

More details and references can be provided to Council as required.

To conclude, Council can meet the climate emergency, save money, generate jobs locally and move Hamilton in the direction of becoming a Green New Deal Community by adopting this strategy.

Specifically, we ask that Council direct City staff to identify all possibilities for installation of solar panels on municipal buildings, especially as roof repair and replacement occurs, and bring back recommendations to Council that identify initial costs, payback times, and any significant risks to installation.

Thank you.