Town of Aurora Community Energy Plan

Stakeholder Working Group Meeting #3

February 27th, 2020, 4:00pm to 6:00pm

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 third SWG meeting was held on February 27, 2020. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review baseline energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.
- Review the business-as-planned scenario.
- Review updated energy maps.
- Solicit feedback on emission reduction scenarios and targets, the vision statement for the plan, and goals.
- Discuss additional items and answer questions as necessary.

Presentation and Participant Comments

The meeting began with welcome remarks and introductions conducted by Natalie Kehle, Town of Aurora, and Susan Hall, LURA Consulting. Susan commenced the presentation with a brief reintroduction to the project and discussed the highlights from the second SWG Meeting. Sarah Shenstone-Harris, ICLEI Canada, provided participants with a reminder of baseline energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs and the business-as-planned scenario. This was supported by a discussion of updated energy consumption mapping lead by Tijo Joseph, Wood.

Participants were invited to ask questions and provide feedback. The following summarizes participant comments and the responses that were provided by the project team.

- How is the energy intensity measured?
    - Intensity is measured based on the building footprint area.
- Will the plan provide context to explain the mapping and how the information can be used to support strategies?
    - Yes, the maps will be supported by narrative text so that the average person can understand the material.
- Concerning the energy intensity maps, the southeast corner of the Town is not developed. Have changes in projected development patterns been considered?
    - Development projections have been taken into consideration.
- Consider looking into high intensity east of Stone and Bayview.

- There are areas with higher energy intensity that reflect large and newer builds constructed within the last seven years. The findings are not surprising given their magnitude.
- Consider looking at the energy intensity for Kennedy Street West / George area as it would have been thought to have higher intensity.
- One of the areas to consider explaining in the text is the energy intensity of the Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area, which is depicted as higher energy intensity. The key would be to note that the conservation area is within a polygon that covers a larger area of residential homes and is shaded based on residential consumption, not the conservation area itself.

Discussion – Preliminary Strategies for Reducing GHGs

Participants were introduced to preliminary strategies to address consumption measures and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Aurora. The following points demonstrate the feedback provided by participants.

Building Retrofits

- Participants discussed the use of local improvement charges (LIC) as a financing tool for residential retrofits. Key points are below:
    - LICs are one example of a tool that has been applied in some jurisdictions, but there are other financing tools.
    - The current application of LICs is not widespread in Ontario to date, but there have been applications in other jurisdictions with some success (e.g. California).
    - One benefit to the LIC model is that LICs are within the Town's jurisdiction to apply.
    - Consider if there may be reluctancy to purchase homes or if energy savings would be perceived as a benefit. Recognize that taxes are already perceived to be high. The benefit must be understood through the long-term energy reduction savings versus the cost of a loan.
    - Incentives could be made available. A whole-home review and assessment can be done at once to plan out the retrofit trajectory and sequencing.
    - Communicate messaging related to the direct benefit for homeowners.
    - A detailed business case for implementation would need to be considered.
- Utility providers such as Enbridge have programs that offer incentives related to building envelopes.
- The group discussed home energy labelling as a tool to support energy efficiency. The group noted that sometimes retrofits are undertaken in response to an emergency (e.g. furnace breaks down) and that these are not instances when a retrofit program will apply as the homeowner will want to fix the issue immediately.
- Labelling at the time of sale is a good time to engage the homeowner. Another good time is when a homeowner applies for a building permit. The Town can incent and compel retrofits.

Industrial Energy Efficiency

- Connect to existing funding streams.

- Connect with industry-standard best practices.

Transportation Mode Shift

- The goal is to shift behaviour, particularly for the first and last mile of all trips.
- There is an opportunity to innovate in a modal shift that is somewhat unique to Aurora. There is a GO Station and opportunities to consider how to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use in transportation strategies.

Electric Vehicle Adoption

- Fleet vehicles, mass transit, on-street parking in public spaces all should be considered for electrification and for infrastructure related to supporting electric vehicle charging.
- The Town should consider working with retailers to install additional charging stations.
- Applications are in progress for numerous charging stations.

Discussion –Emission Reduction Scenarios

Participants were provided with two emissions reduction scenarios for consideration. The following points demonstrate the feedback received.

- Current targets indicate interim and long-term goals. However, they need to consider the Climate Emergency Declaration and should be no less the directions identified in the declaration.
- Industrial emissions are expected to grow due to planned growth in new employment lands. Participants requested that the plan identify a slightly greater push for industrial sector efficiencies to be considered.
- Emissions monitoring should show the annual rate of change.
- The Town of Aurora's development of its Green Standards should be aligned with the directions of the CEP for new construction.
- Consider splitting out residential and commercial programs and associated efficiency gains because of the different approaches taken and differences in program design. In both sectors, consider programs that target the landlord/landowner.
- The group were supportive of the following further strategies to be explored:
    - Fuel switching - Natural gas data demonstrated high emissions. Shifting towards more electricity needs to be considered and weighed against socio-economic impacts.
    - District energy – dependent on the density.
    - Offsets - Consider carbon sequestration opportunities and the optimization of green infrastructure.

Discussion – Vision Statement

Participants were shown a revised iteration of the plan's vision statement. The following provides the feedback received.

- Change the wording to state Aurora "is" rather than Aurora "will be."
- The phrase "act on climate change" is too vague and needs to be more action-oriented.
- Add a reference to the goal of improving the quality of life in Aurora.

Discussion – Goals

The final portion of the meeting focused on proposed goals for the CEP. This section demonstrates the feedback was shared.

- Avoid a passive voice in the goals.
- Regarding economic development, terms related to saving “energy dollars” may not be intuitive and may need to be explained.
- Add a goal related to the natural environment that considers carbon capture, protecting the urban tree canopy, and other similar initiatives.
- “Active transportation options” is too vague. The Town’s trails system should be considered, and innovation should also be mentioned.

Next Steps

Natalie, Jennifer and Susan thanked participants for their time and contributions. The next meeting is anticipated for late spring 2020 and will focus on continuing to refine proposed strategies.