

## Youth give resounding thumbs-up to Community Energy Plan

Although it might be at least another week before Aurora's Community Energy Plan receives its final ratification from Council, local youth have given the goal to slash greenhouse gas emissions and find efficiencies an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Council, meeting at the Committee level, gave its tentative approval to the Town's draft Community Energy Plan, one which identifies sources of emissions and proposes solutions, all with a goal of cutting emissions down by 80 per cent from 2018 levels by 2050.

Before the official debates could even get under way, however, three elementary students stepped up to have their voices heard on the issue. And their message was clear: it's time to get moving to improve the environment.

"I have always loved the environment and the older I get the more I see what climate change is doing to our planet," said Alexandra L. "I love our community and I would love to help as much as I can. Because I realize what is happening to our earth, I would like to change the environmental impact we're having on our plants and animals.

"This is a huge step in the right direction and hopefully in the future we will be able to see the change it has made. I am well aware of what is happening to our earth and humans are the cause. We are also noticing how it is already impacting ecosystems, some more than others, and communities play a huge role in these impacts. Luckily, just as we are the problem, we can also be part of the solution."

By taking these steps towards sustainability, we will be on the road towards healthier lives, she said.

"By activating this plan, it can also create job opportunities for citizens as we need people to create these electric car stations and solar panels," she said. "It can be extremely beneficial financially for you and the community as well. I don't see how there could be any downsides to this plan and I really hope it becomes a reality as it will impact the environment in the most positive way possible. I can finish growing up in this community in the years to come by watching how this plan evolves to create a better world."

Students Valerie S. and Sumaya C. offered similar viewpoints, presenting together, albeit separately, during last week's Committee meeting held over Zoom.

"The next years are the last we can really make a difference," said Valerie. "The plan will help the community of Aurora to develop an eco-friendly environment which can really help us in the future. We think the ideas in this plan are beneficial and can be put to great use by our Town."

Added Sumaya: "We think that becoming more sustainable is immensely important. Becoming more sustainable and eco-friendly would be more cost-effective and could help save money in our community. We could use that money for more eco-friendly and sustainable changes throughout the Town or [for] new programs in the future."

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter