

Community Energy Plan targeted for 2021

**By
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A Town-wide plan to look at ways to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gasses is now targeted for completion by 2021.

Originally floated in 2017 through a motion from the late Councillor John Abel, a Community Energy Plan was hoped to provide the municipality, residents and businesses alike with a blueprint towards greener living.

Unanimously approved at the time, the motion called on staff to prepare a budget for a Community Energy Plan intended to support local development, foster behavioural change and a culture of conservation within Aurora.

Initial plans to bring the Community Energy Plan (CEP) to fruition, however, were initially stymied by funding issues, but now that funding is back in place, Council learned last week that the plan is back on track for completion in 2021.

Staff have prepared the Terms of Reference for the CEP and secured Provincial and Federal funding under Ontario's Municipal Energy Plan Program and Canada's Municipalities for Climate Innovation program, said Anca Mihail, Aurora's Manager of Engineering and Capital Delivery, in her report to Council. A CEP is a comprehensive long-term plan to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, foster green energy solutions, and support economic development.

Aurora's CEP will look at energy use across the entire municipality and includes a municipality's residential, commercial, industrial and public-sector energy use, including municipal operations and energy infrastructure. [It will] identify energy conservation and green energy opportunities for all sectors within the broader context of the built environment, land use planning and growth; help to articulate municipal priorities for other energy planning initiatives, such as regional and provincial energy plans [and] include energy mapping to visually represent energy intensity and conservation opportunities.

Ontario's Municipal Energy Plan provides grants for the creation of CEPs for up to 50 per cent of the total project's costs (up to \$90,000) provided stakeholders have been engaged and the plan approved by Council. In addition, Ms. Mihail notes that a further \$81,900 of funding for the plan has been received from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program.

Stakeholder consultation is set to begin this May, going through to the end of September.

Gathering baseline data and carrying out the energy mapping component of the plan is estimated to run between this October and the end of January 2020. The creation of the plan and the formal approval of Council is estimated to take a year ? from February 1, 2020 through to the end of February 2021.

The creation of the Community Energy Plan, as well as an update towards the Town's Corporate Energy Plan, which looks at operations within Town-owned facilities, was warmly received by Council at the Committee Level last week. Greenlighting it there, it is up for formal ratification by Council this week.

?This has quite a history,? said Councillor Wendy Gaertner. ?Councillor Abel had a motion that the Terms of Reference for the Community Energy Plan were to come to Council for approval. After that, Council had a report from our Environment Manager that basically said [what this report] said that the Terms of Reference had been prepared and, I think sent out. I brought it to Council's attention that Councillor Abel actually had a motion to say the Terms of Reference had to come to Council. There's no reference to that in the report and I don't know if it was part of the 2017 report. Anyway, at that time, we did decide that we wouldn't move forward with anything and we would wait until the funding came in. We still have a Council motion that said the Terms of Reference would come to Council and that hasn't happened. I have the same concern I had at least a year ago that we never got to see the Terms of Reference.?