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Town of Aurora

Memorandum

Planning and Development Services

Re: Home Energy Retrofit Program Feasibility Study Update

To: Environmental Advisory Committee

From: Natalie Kehle, Program Manager Energy and Environment

Date: May 12, 2025

Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding Home Energy Retrofit Program Feasibility Study Update be received; and
2. That the Environmental Advisory Committee comments regarding Home Energy Retrofit Program Feasibility Study Update be received and referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

Background

Addressing greenhouse gas emissions from Aurora's residential building sector was identified as a critical emissions strategy in the Aurora Community Energy Plan (CEP). Emissions from homes represent the biggest source of emissions at 37%, primarily due to natural gas use for space and water heating.

Currently, around 1% of Aurora homes are, on average, completing energy retrofits annually, based on 2023 to 2024 EnerGuide data. To meet Town 2050 targets of 80% greenhouse gas reduction from 2018, approximately 3% of homes each year are required to perform deep retrofits that achieve a substantial reduction in energy usage, typically by 50% or more. Deep energy retrofits have been historically difficult to achieve due to social and economic barriers. The upfront costs of renovations are a major barrier to action.

Analysis

The feasibility study aims to assess the market conditions, co-benefits, financial options and services available to the community and determine if a volunteer deep energy

retrofit program is the right fit for Aurora. The study also explores financing options for a loan program. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is supporting this project through their Community Efficiency Financing (CEF) grant.

The Town retained the consulting services of Dunsky Energy and Climate Advisors to support the development of the study. The project kicked-off in December 2024 with the study completion date planned for June 2025. The project consists of the following elements:

1. Stakeholder Engagement (completed), which included identifying relevant stakeholders and seeking input throughout the project, including from:
 - Town staff from the following teams:
 - Engineering and Capital Delivery
 - Finance
 - Building
 - Planning
 - IT Services - GIS
 - Community Services - Sports and Recreation (Diversity Equity and Inclusion)
 - Community Services- Seniors Centre
 - Town Environmental Advisory Committee
 - External stakeholders including:
 - York Region staff
 - Other local municipalities
 - Enbridge Gas
 - Alectra Utilities
 - Aurora residents
 - Aurora's Senior Centre
 - Building Industry and Land Development Association – BILD
 - Local financial institutions
2. Project Background (completed), which assembled relevant information to assess a home energy retrofit program, financing options and community benefits.
3. Program Approach (completed), with an understanding of Aurora's context, this stage of the project recommends how to proceed with a detailed program design for a local efficiency program, as well as identify financing models best suited for Aurora.
4. Final Report and Presentation (in- progress). The draft study is presented to Town Council, scheduled for June 10th Committee of the Whole.

A second phase of the project is provisionally planned to develop a detailed program design and implementation plan upon Council endorsement of the feasibility study. The second phase of the project identifies potential program champions, cost implications and roles and responsibilities.

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 - Presentation Home Energy Retrofit Program Feasibility Study Update