

Council Meeting
September 20, 2022

**Comments Received Regarding Item 9.1-
Community Energy Strategy
Implementation Update**

From: Aki Tanaka

Sent: September 20, 2022 1:31 AM

To: _Members of Council <MembersofCouncil@oakville.ca>; Town Clerks <TownClerk@oakville.ca>

Cc: Mervyn Russell <Hart Jansson <Ron McKee

Subject: Oakville Town Council Meeting, Sept 20, 2022 – Agenda Item 9.1 - Community Energy Strategy Implementation Update

Mayor Burton and Councilors,

I am not able to attend the re-scheduled Town Council meeting where this item is to be discussed. I present my delegation in this email.

I am writing to you as a representative of the Oakville Climate Action Facebook group, a group of 175 members, that was formed after I held a climate strike in front of Town Hall in Sept 2019. I also represent the Oakville Climate Hub, (<https://climatehub.mystrikingly.com/blog/oakville>) which is a group that is supported by Climate Reality, Al Gore's foundation. Our main activity has been to collect data on 30 environmental indicators for Oakville. These indicators are common across Canada and will allow us to compare our performance with other municipalities, as well as look for trends over the years. Our efforts have been ably supported by Donna Hales, Corporate Strategy Program Advisor in the Strategy, Policy and Communications Department. The data collection follows the Partner for Climate Protection guidance established by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

TEN years ago, the IPCC report did what a climate report should do. It warned people about the future in time for us to do something. We did not heed the warnings and now we have, as predicted, more heat waves, worsening drought, increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, increasing downpours causing floods and stronger and wetter tropical cyclones. We are all bombarded daily with bad news about climate. In these anxious times, we look to Council, among other organisations, for support and leadership. This is to say that the decisions you make are important.

I have been following the work of the Oakville Energy Task Force (OETF) since its inception by attending all the public sessions. I congratulate the Strategy, Policy and Communications Department, the Oakville Energy Task Force, the FEO Board and the new Executive Director, the Oakville Enterprises Corporation and Garforth International for continuing the efforts to bring the Community Energy Strategy and the priority projects to life. The progress made on the business case for an energy retrofit company, feasibility studies for district energy, the integration of Community Energy Strategy (CES) goals into municipal planning tools and processes, the installation of public chargers and the purchase of electric buses is good. I still believe that the implementation of the CES will bring large scale transformation to the energy landscape in Oakville. Oakville will also set an example for other municipalities in Canada and the US.

But we must pick up the pace. I am dismayed at the delays in the implementation although I understand that COVID had an impact on the schedule. Could the OETF revisit the schedule for priority projects in light of the pandemic?

I also ask that Council consider dedicating more resources to staff and programs that are supporting the FEO and the OETF and the implementation of the CES and other programs that are addressing the climate emergency. Knowing that the Town spent millions on the Save Glen Abbey campaign, it is hard for me to understand why more resources are not committed to these efforts.

The retrofit company business case was presented in detail at the Sept. 13 OETF meeting. Shouldn't the OETF and Council be questioning why the emissions targets are not being met?

Also, from what I recall of the OETF meeting on Sept. 13, the implementation date for large scale retrofits is three years in the future. Is there nothing the Town can do between now and 2025 to allow early adopters to transition off of natural gas and to heat pumps? Better Homes Ottawa, Better Homes Kingston and Retrofit Halton Hills are examples of municipalities offering low cost or interest free loans to people who want to take action now. Such a program could provide learning experience for the bigger transformation that needs to take place. There are also early adopters looking to take advantage of the Canada Greener Homes Loans. Is there a way the Town could support them?

In summary, my asks are that:

- OETF revisit the priority projects schedule to reflect delays due to COVID
- Council dedicate more resources to climate staff and programs
- Council and OETF question emissions targets from retrofit business case (they do not meet the overall GHG emissions reduction target for the CES, why is this?)
- Council considers low cost or interest free loans integrated with Canada Greener Homes Loans for early adopters of deep retrofits

The success of the FEO depends on the capability of the newly appointed Executive Director to raise funds, communicate to stakeholders and the public and hire qualified staff. I hope that Council sees fit to support him in any way possible.

Thank you for all you are doing for Oakville.

Aki Tanaka

BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Climate Action in the Town of Oakville

Oakville Town Council Meeting, Sept 20, 2022 – Agenda Item 9.1 Community Energy Strategy Implementation Update

Prepared by Halton Action for Climate Emergency Now (HACEN) www.hacen.info

1) Op-Ed article (Hart Jansson, HACEN) – Sept 18, 2020

Oakville Climate Action to include new gas furnaces?



Exterior heat-pump equipment for a recent Oakville energy retro-fit

As a public participant, I was quite shocked to discover at the Oakville Energy Task Force meeting on Sept. 13th, that a feasibility study commissioned by the Town and Oakville

Enterprises Corporation will be recommending installation of new gas furnaces in 2030 and beyond. The feasibility study recommends moving forward with business planning for an 'entity' that will be responsible for residential energy retrofits in Oakville; part of **the recommendation is to base the business plan on substantial installations of new gas furnaces, but doesn't meet the Community Energy Strategy (CES) goal of 50% emissions reduction by 2041** (the projection is a 38% reduction).

Gas furnaces are the major source of greenhouse gas emissions from residences. The average residence emits 4 tonnes of carbon emissions per year. Replacement of a gas furnace with a heat-pump or addition of a hybrid heat-pump can reduce these emissions by 50% to 70%, and can also save the homeowner money (see [Heat Pump Calculator](#) for details). Other cities and regions like Ottawa, Toronto, Kingston and Durham have low-interest loans and other incentives, in addition to the federal '[Greener Homes Program](#)', to encourage installation of heat-pumps.

Given that other cities (Montreal and Vancouver for example) and entire countries (UK, Germany etc) have legislated the phase-out of oil or natural gas-based air and water heating by 2025 or earlier, it baffles me that Oakville, a supposed leader in climate change mitigation, is considering this option which would perpetuate the use of fossil fuels beyond 2040. Also of note: we know that fossil fuel usage increases the number of heart attacks and strokes - it has now been scientifically proven by the Frances Crick Institute that fossil fuels cause lung cancer - a link to the study is [here](#).

On behalf of Halton Action for Climate Emergency Now (HACEN), I will be asking Council not to endorse the recommendations from the Residential Energy Retrofit Feasibility Study - we must go back to the drawing board to fix this plan. **There is a Council meeting on Tuesday Sept. 20 where these recommendations will be considered. If you agree that this is a bad plan for the health of our community and for the climate crisis, please email or call your Councillor before 7 PM on Tuesday.** HACEN is also recommending that the Town should set more ambitious emission reduction targets to match the recent updates in targets set by the Canadian and US and other governments. And that Future Energy Oakville, a new community-based non-profit which is overseeing climate action initiatives, should interact with the public and be more transparent in its actions, especially now that Enbridge owns 10% of Oakville Hydro and related companies. See more background and additional recommendations to Council from HACEN at www.hacen.info.

I am hopeful that Oakville Council will show the insight and leadership required to get our community-based Climate Action program back on the right track.

Hart Jansson, Co-founder of HACEN and 19-year resident of Oakville

2) **Background Information and Recommendations**

(skip to the end for the most important recommendations)

2022: Recent Report from the Town of Oakville

Town staff submitted the *Climate Action: Progress and Directions Report*: https://www.oakville.ca/townhall/nr-22apr26_2.html to Council in April 2022.

Tree canopy analysis (done?)

Research for climate financing options to introduce a climate action levy is underway; for the immediate and mid-term future, HACEN suggests use of reserve funds in the meantime (eg the 2021 budget surplus of \$11.5M).

Home energy retrofit feasibility study with Oakville Hydro is complete (2021: Received funding from FCM to initiate Retrofit project with Oakville Energy Corporation).

Participating in District Energy Full Feasibility Study with the Consulate of Denmark in Toronto. Funding application to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for next phase of work to move District Energy ahead, is in progress.

2022: IMPLEMENTATION

The Town participated in Community Energy Strategy (CES) development and rollout – approved in early 2020. Town provided seed funding (\$250,000) and is actively supporting the rollout, which is delayed by about 2 years.

The Climate Crisis is evolving quickly and our understanding of causes and mitigation approaches is also evolving. In addition to the mounting evidence that current financial and environmental impacts from climate are worse than the worst-case scenarios of a few years ago, deaths and disease **in Canada, are rising due to climate. In addition to heat, fire and flood-related deaths, for example, we now have definitive proof that fossil fuel combustion causes cancer, via nano-particles.** The Community Energy Strategy (CES) and the OETF/FEO framework, with a once-in-5-years-review cycle is not adaptive to revision between 5-year reviews. The FEO is committed to fulfilling the targets set in the CES 2020. This is especially problematic as we currently have only a 2041 target, no major community project implementation expected before 2025, no intermediate targets and no metrics or reporting framework.

HACEN recommends:

- Update the goals of emission reduction to 40% by 2030 (instead of 50% by 2041) and 80% by 2041, to match the recent 2030 federal targets and to reflect the evidence-based reality of the unfolding climate crisis:
 - o Australia 43% (2030)
 - o US 52% (2030)
 - o Canada 40 to 45% (2030)
 - o At a bare minimum we need intermediate goals, metrics and a public reporting and public engagement framework

- Disappointing that after a 3-year-long emergency, we have none of these!
- More urgency: how do we catch up to the schedule and objectives in the CES? For several key projects, we are about 2 years behind: ARE WE IN A CLIMATE EMERGENCY?
- Bylaws to enable 3rd-party financing/LIC of retrofits: eg Guelph has passed their PACE initiative – pass these bylaws in 2023 to enable and encourage homeowners and private sector companies to act immediately to reduce emissions
- Oakville could initiate and/or support a project for hybrid heat-pumps that cut an average of 60% of emissions for an average of \$10,000 – with 3rd-party financing/LIC, **in parallel with efforts at the FEO** (see www.hacen.info 'News Articles' for examples of recent installations)
- Spend some money: we had an \$11.5M surplus in 2021 and we spend \$20M+ on every community center to improve the lives of residents; let's carefully and cost-effectively spend a few million to kickstart community climate initiatives that will reduce carbon emissions. This will produce new local jobs and provide energy savings to residents, as well as reduce the incidence of lung cancer, heart attacks and strokes in our community - **we now have definitive proof that fossil fuel combustion causes cancer, via nano-particles.**
- Publicize metrics, goals and progress regularly.
- Establish a metric for \$ spent vs emissions reduced (and include \$ saved by the residents?).

Oakville's Climate Change Primer, nowhere mentions the objective of reducing carbon emissions. The 'Top Ten Actions' leaflet could be updated to include heat pumps for air heating and cooling and water heating.

Apr 25 Oakville Council meeting, climate item – 90% of time spent on corporate stuff; should be at least equal treatment with community initiatives where 98% of the benefits are to be found

- In future Council meetings and Climate-related reports, we should remind ourselves that the Corporate energy use and emissions are 1.5% of the Oakville total, and that separate discussions be held for Corporate climate items and Town-wide climate items, with more emphasis on Town-wide items
- Most recent reports available for Halton Region show emissions are rising not falling
- According to the Community Energy Strategy, we are 2 years behind the original plan
 - How will we catch up?
 - Will the Town encourage the OETF/FEO to update its objectives and plans?
 - Will we adjust objectives to match the greater urgency that the climate crisis demands and to match the revised federal and international targets?
- A Climate Action Strategy will be submitted to Council in 2023 – this 4 years after the declaration of Emergency

- Oakville's budget is \$600M per year with an \$11.5 M surplus in 2021
- Councilor Robertson asked about climate-related staffing at the Apr 25, 2022 Council meeting: I would humbly submit that we are substantially under-staffed to help achieve Town-wide climate action objectives , not to mention playing catch-up on a 2-year delay

Climate Action Directions Report

“WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Mitigation is critical if we want to avoid more catastrophic climate impacts. In Oakville, **efforts need to focus on reducing our highest sources of GHGs: buildings and transportation.** Both the Town and community are responsible for mitigation and efforts will need to include developing and retrofitting buildings to be more energy efficient, making choices that reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles and creating the systems and infrastructure to support those choices. “

The Corporate achievements are an example of what can be accomplished when we use available technologies and approaches for operational energy efficiency of buildings. The same could be accomplished in residential buildings if only we had a building code similar to that in Europe which mandates all new buildings adhere to a Near-Zero Energy Building (NZEB) standard. I suggest that **Council and the Mayor consider using all efforts possible given our state of Climate Emergency, including joint efforts with other municipalities, to lobby the provincial government to improve the Ontario Building Code** to match the NZEB standard in terms of energy efficiency requirements, as well as improve other policies and incentives to help municipalities reduce their energy usage and carbon emissions.

There have been discussions at Council about enacting bylaws which permit 3rd-party financing for residential energy retrofits via a LIC mechanism that would be attached as a lien to the residence, as other municipalities have done (Guelph - PACE). Such a mechanism would immediately encourage homeowners and private sector retrofit providers to proceed more quickly. Such a mechanism would enable and encourage the creativity and innovation of the private sector to provide retrofit solutions. Is Council is committed to taking this action in 2023?? and please explain why this has not been done in the 3 years since our Climate Emergency declaration. Delay will continue to stifle private sector activity and homeowner action.

FEO-related:

“WHY IT’S IMPORTANT: Climate action does not happen in a vacuum. The actions associated with this Focus Area are the scaffolding required, across the corporation, to ensure accountable, consistent, targeted, and sustained action on climate change. Foundational supports turn plans and strategies into action and include considerations such as financing, governance, data, targets and metrics, education and training and effective communication. **To ensure we can effectively put our climate strategies and plans into action, we need to focus on putting key foundational supports in place. “**

These foundational supports are also required for the FEO and the major projects it is overseeing.

OETF meeting, FEO status and Retrofit Feasibility Study (Sept 13, 2022)

The FEO has hired an Exec Director (Aug, 2022). As previously stated, this is 2 years behind the original schedule. Fundraising for the operational budget of the FEO is also behind schedule – a fundraising firm has been hired and one of the new ED's priorities is to raise funds for the FEO. Financial support in the community for the FEO has not been as strong as expected.

As far as community-based priority projects, the only visible progress is in District Energy and Residential Retrofits. For District Energy, funding is being sought for a detailed feasibility study for the Hospital district.

Residential Retrofits

The feasibility study, funded by the Town/Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and overseen by Oakville Enterprises Corp is complete. The assumptions include formation of a single 'entity' to implement the retrofits of 80% of the existing detached housing stock in Oakville. The entity would work with local contractors to perform the retrofit work but would be the 'general contractor' that would be responsible for the quality of the work and warranties etc. The entity would interact with investors, lenders, homeowners and the Town to achieve the goals set out in the CES. The projections of the feasibility study show that the **goals for carbon emission reduction would not be met by 2041 (38% vs target 50%)**. This is apparently due to the fact that **a large number of the retrofits would include new gas furnaces!!** Other jurisdictions are prohibiting the use of fossil fuel appliances to heat or cool air and water in residences (eg, Vancouver, Montreal) starting in 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS from HACEN

Use Town money to update the feasibility study/business case to **assume no new fossil fuel equipment is installed, before the business plan phase is begun**. This will achieve the goal of GHG emissions reduction. Remember, we not only have the moderately ambitious 2041 goal, but we **now know that fossil fuel combustion causes cancer**. Expand the business case / assumptions to include non-residential retrofits to ensure profitability of the 'entity'.

Expand the business case to include hybrid heat-pump options to provide lower-cost options to homeowners that reduce emissions by 50% +.

Make the reference data for the taxpayer-funded feasibility study available to the public.

Ensure free-market activity in addition to the 'entity'

- Facilitate private sector actors and DIY solutions, at a minimum by passing the LIC-enabling bylaws and establishing the administrative support for LIC/3rd-party financing attached to the residential property, by mid-2023
- For the solutions being developed by the OETF/FEO, ensure transparency and public interaction

September 16, 2022

SENT VIA E-MAIL**Reference: Council Meeting September 20, 2022 – Item 9.1 Community Energy Strategy
Implementation Update**

Dear Mayor Rob Burton and Councillors,

On behalf of the [Halton Environmental Network](https://haltonenvironet.ca) (HEN), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Community Energy Strategy (CES) Implementation Update. Founded in 2004, HEN is a non-profit organization which propels climate action and environmental sustainability across Halton.

HEN has been an active volunteer member of the Oakville Energy Task Force (OETF) since its inception in 2019. Participating at meetings, bringing in climate science, relating HEN's climate and sustainability activities within the Halton communities, and being involved in foundational governance and board formation work for Future Energy Oakville (FEO), has been rewarding.

I am pleased to represent HEN on the OETF to advise on and support implementation of the Community Energy Strategy, by community partners, including HEN, with the FEO as the foundational organization.

The Town's declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019 was built on a strong foundation of climate work over prior years.

The CES, presented by the OETF and endorsed by Council on February 20, 2020, includes community goals for improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and enhancing the local economy with a plan to mitigate community GHG emissions.

As a community-based initiative, it will be important to have organizations, partners and individuals support and contribute their actions to play a role and achieve impact in implementation of the CES.

Of note, there are so many examples of what not to do in terms of delivering an effective residential building retrofit program, that what needs to be carried forward is a way that 'cracks the code'. There have been and may be programs that focus on the highest, costliest and the least well understood building energy reduction options that would result in the highest energy reduction. However, with no public uptake or continued political support, there has been and may be no impact. The program sits on a shelf or the organization dissolves, but the administrative costs still exist to be borne by the organization or group that begins the program. The end result has often been dismal.

The key to effectiveness and delivering impact lies in setting up the offering to the community that is practicable, set up for success meaning understandable and affordable, and therefore becomes implementable. This is our perception of the work coming out of the Deep Home Energy Retrofits Feasibility Study: <https://haltonenvironet.ca/deep-home-energy-retrofits-feasibility-study/>.



HEN continues work to propel climate action within the community. Like other organizations, municipalities, NGO's, and more, while COVID may have slowed progress in climate initiatives, it did not halt work. Organizations pivoted, and in many cases rose to the challenge of the continually changing circumstances.

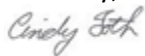
Examples of HEN initiatives, supporting and in alignment with the goal to raise the community's awareness of climate change, propelling GHGe reductions include:

- Engaging the community in the "Every Action Counts" survey as an initiative of the Halton Climate Collective with HEN as the backbone agency
- Three Generation Green Youth initiatives (2018/2019, 2019/2020, 2021/2022) with involvement of 350 Halton students, 9,500 community involvement hours, reducing GHGe's by 70.5 tonnes GHGe reduction. The most recent initiative targetted sustainable transportation as the youth-chosen focus. The transportation sector is a major contributor to GHGe's.
- Community engagement supporting green building standards including a raised profile on HEN's digital media.
- Compilation of community-focused plans for climate action working towards a Halton community climate action plan
- Organizing and hosting three, soon to be four, virtual Halton Climate Collective (HCC) Reads sessions in partnership with libraries, the school boards, HCC members and other public and private groups to spur and inspire climate action. These reached about 2,500 residents. All featured books representing facets of climate change including impacts, climate justice and effective climate conversations.
- As HEN furthers climate change mitigation and adaptation work in Halton, we endeavor to strengthen relationships not only with leaders from Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation but also with local, grassroots Indigenous partners who have led, guided and collaborated on various local initiatives. This guidance is imperative as HEN continues to foster intercultural community cohesion.
- HEN's Annual report from last year outlines initiatives and community impact: https://haltonenvironet.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Halton-Environmental-Network_AR-compressed.pdf. Our website and social media channels ensure ongoing connection with community to elevate climate awareness and actions.

HEN commits to continuing support of proposed actions within the CES and FEO, and working to propel climate action and elevating the climate conversation within the community.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission, and we welcome any questions or comments. Please feel free to contact me at cindy@haltonenvironment.ca.

Sincerely,



Cindy Toth
Acting Chair, Halton Environmental Network

