

FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING TO IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

A review of emerging standards in community energy
planning to support Phase 1 of Guelph's Community Energy
Initiative Update

Prepared for:

Guelph Community Energy Initiative Task Force

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Summary / Highlights

- Community energy plans, in spirit and in practice, are predicated on the idea that pending structural changes to our energy systems will be easier to foresee, to manage, to capitalize on, and to accept, if they are guided by a strategic community energy plan.
- Guelph has the resources and capacity to pursue a ‘comprehensive’ community energy plan; i.e., a plan that combines initiatives in energy conservation, local distribution, and local supply.
- Community energy plans are most creative when they work from a set of high-level visions and goals (strategic planning), and are most successful when those visions and goals are translated into intermediate objectives and initiatives with assigned responsibility to empowered stakeholders for action (implementation planning)
- The ‘success’ of a community energy plan is most appropriately assessed based on a combination of process and outcome indicators tied to intermediate objectives and initiatives (i.e., the implementation plan), not to the high level visions and goals
- Early community engagement is critical to success in the near and the long term. Developing a strategy for community engagement must be a near-term priority of the Task Force.
- A proposed process by which to update Guelph’s CEI, based on state-of-art theory and consensus around best practice, is described in Figure 1
- This document contains a series of ‘considerations’ that the Task Force may want to discuss/debate before moving forward.

About the Authors & Acknowledgements

Dr. Kirby Calvert received his PhD in Geography (2013) at Queen's University in Kingston Ontario, where he worked with the Queen's Institute of Energy and Environmental Policy. After two fulfilling years as an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at The Pennsylvania State University where he was cross-appointed with the Penn State Institutes of Energy and Environment (2013-2015), Kirby returned to Canada to join the Department of Geography at the University of Guelph. Dr. Calvert is Co-Director and Principal Investigator of the Community Energy Knowledge-Action Partnership (CEKAP); a national partnership of universities, municipalities, and other non-academic partners with shared interests in improving the process and outcomes of community energy planning (www.cekap.ca). He has studied energy policy issues in Ontario and elsewhere using both qualitative and quantitative techniques for approximately eight years, with a focus on land-use issues and the trend toward decentralized energy governance.

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List of Acronyms

CEP = Community Energy Planning
CEI = Community Energy Initiative
QUEST = Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow
DER = Distributed Energy Resources
GTI = Getting to Implementation

1. Background

The City of Guelph has initiated a process to update the City of Guelph Community Energy Initiative (CEI), first established in 2006. At its core, a community energy plan (CEP) documents a community's vision for how it can leverage energy systems to achieve broader social, environmental, and economic objectives. 'Community' implies a collective and inclusive endeavor, in which local government is one among many stakeholders and agents of change. 'Plan' implies a comprehensive and long-term view. Although CEPs will look different across communities, due to differences in institutional capacity, community values, and comparative advantages, generally speaking a CEP is best described in two parts. First, a set of goals for energy efficiency gains, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and local sustainable energy solutions in the community. Second, a roadmap or blueprint to achieving those goals. This roadmap or blueprint includes a description of possible technological changes, institutional changes, social changes (civil influence), and / or strategic social and institutional partnerships that need to be in place.

Why do this now?

The timing could not be more appropriate. A decade removed from Guelph's first CEI, the conditions under which, or the context within which, community energy initiatives are established and implemented have changed dramatically:

- More than 150 communities representing more than 50% of the Canadian population now have a CEI of some kind (Littlejohn and Laszlo, 2015). A 'first mover' in 2006, Guelph now has a long list of peer communities from which to learn, and to develop a much improved version of its original CEI.
- Electricity systems and electrical utilities are being forced to change with the onset of cost-competitive distributed energy resources (DERs) (EDA, 2017). Declining costs of "solar plus storage" and efficiency improvements, set against increasing market rates and rising consumer empowerment, has the potential to drive ratepayers off the system (the so-called 'utility death spiral'). Utilities must think strategically about how it will adapt; e.g., by acting as a service platform rather than a commodity carrier and / or investing in DERs directly through unregulated activities.
- Ontario's electricity system is much less greenhouse gas intensive after extensive fuel switching at the provincial level away from coal. Now, the most GHG intensive sectors are transport, industry, and buildings; sectors that can be directly engaged by local-level energy initiatives.
- Electric and other alternative-fuel vehicles are re-shaping urban mobility patterns and fuel supply infrastructures which will have a direct and increasingly significant impact on Guelph's broader urban planning processes and objectives.
- A paradigm shift has occurred in Canada's governance system. The federal and provincial governments are increasingly relying on and mandating municipalities to establish and implement local action plans around climate mitigation and adaptation. Through a more advanced CEI, Guelph will align with this paradigm shift, and will develop a clear sense of what the City needs from other orders of government in order to deliver on its mandate.
- Related to this, governance over Ontario's energy system is rapidly decentralizing, as exemplified by the IESO Integrated Regional Resource Planning process. Also, in 2014

the OEB have implemented a Renewed Regulatory Framework for Electricity which, among other things, requires Distribution System Plans to improve coordination between utilities.

Why do this at all?

How quickly those structural changes described above will unfold in any given community is an open question. What is clear, however, is that all of those trends manifest at the local level in terms of new service delivery models, new economic opportunities, new landscapes, and new pressures on energy bills. Community energy plans, in spirit and in practice, are predicated on the idea that these structural changes will be easier to foresee, to manage, to capitalize on, and to accept, if they are guided by a strategic community energy plan (GTI, 2016). In other words, community energy plans:

- Provide a framework for decision-making and a focal point for conversation across local stakeholder groups and citizens as new opportunities and challenges arise
- Help to overcome policy failure by filling a void left by government (Cowell et al., 2015; Van der Schoor and Scholtens, 2015). Community-level issues are sometimes outside of the purview of provincial-level planning activities. Municipal-level activities can fill this void under certain conditions, which is the impetus behind decentralizing energy planning activities. More importantly, formal government action is by itself insufficient to manage the structural changes described above. Government at all levels has a limited influence on energy systems; limitations that can be overcome if problems are scoped and solutions are identified with meaningful input from the general community, business leaders, civic leaders, academics, and other non-government organizations.
- Help to overcome market failure. The development and implementation of CEPs helps to raise awareness about the economic benefits of new energy technologies and behaviors. Often, failure to adopt among the general public is related to poor messaging, low awareness, and / or lack of trust. CEPs include strategies to overcome these failures, and the process of developing a CEP is itself an opportunity to engage with the consumer base.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Document

This document provides a summary of the core principles that have emerged around CEPs over the last decade, with the intention to guide the activities of the Task Force through Phase 1 of the CEI Update Process. As the document unfolds, a set of ‘considerations’ will be put forward to the Task Force. Decisions made around these considerations will form the structure by which Task Force activities unfold.

The summary and recommendations contained in this document have been established based on a review of practitioner and academic literature around community energy planning. Priority was given to literature that combined theories of effective governance with case-study analysis of CEP in practice. In particular, the review builds heavily on recent research conducted by the ‘Getting to Implementation’ project which involved extensive research in communities across Canada by three research organizations: QUEST, the Community Energy Association, and the Smart Prosperity Institute. While recognizing

the need to account for unique policy, political, and market conditions in Ontario and Canada more generally, the scope of the review included jurisdictions that have a longer and richer history of decentralized energy systems and local energy system planning, especially Scandinavian and Western European countries (which, it should be noted, have many similarities to the Canadian context in terms of the factors that bear heavily upon energy planning policies and practices: developed market economies, liberal democracies, multi-level governance arrangements, pressures on urbanization, growing urban-rural tensions).

This document represents the first in a series of three reports. The second report in this series (March 13) will provide more details on the following, based on a deeper analysis of experiences across peer communities in Ontario:

- Targets that have been set across other Canadian jurisdictions at the ‘visioning’ stage of CEP development (see Figure 1 below)
- The specific tools and procedures used for community engagement
- The municipal sphere of influence
- The roles that a municipality can play in implementation and implementation planning

The third report in this series will provide an inventory of policies and programs from provincial governments and agencies that can support Guelph’s efforts in CEP development and implementation. This will include recommendations on which and how to engage those opportunities, along with a high-level regulatory risk analysis.

3. Principles & Approaches for Effective CEP Development

The technical and policy principles of community energy planning are at least three decades in the making (e.g., Wene et al., 1988; Jaccard et al., 1997; GTI, 2016). In large part, these principles have been established around the assumption that community energy plans would be led directly by municipal governments, using only the tools directly available to municipal staff. Our undertaking in Guelph is unique, in that it represents an attempt to move the CEP out of City Hall through a Task Force and by clearly defining the role of the municipality as more than just the ‘implementer’ of the plan. With this in mind, this section identifies and describes a set of core principles that have been deemed critical to the success of Guelph’s efforts. Throughout this section, a set of ‘considerations’ have been identified for the Task Force to discuss, leading into Phase 1 of the CEI Update process.

Work from a Baseline

As a matter of first principles, all CEPs are based on an inventory of energy use and emissions across the territory in question. Indeed, provincial and federal governments are increasingly mandating such inventories. In order to make meaningful comparisons across time and space, standard protocols for developing inventories must be developed. Fortunately, a range of modeling tools and data sharing protocols are emerging in Canada to support these efforts (NRCan, 2015), along with standard protocols (accounting and reporting guidelines) through which to conduct greenhouse gas emissions estimates at the

municipal level (FCM, 2014). In many communities, inventories and estimates are visualized in a geographic information system in order to conduct more refined analyses in a spatial environment and to use maps as public communication tools (GTI, 2016).

Consider: adopting protocols espoused by federal or provincial organizations such as the Emissions Analysis Protocol developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (see FCM, 2014) in order to align with other orders of government.

Consider: formulating data-sharing procedures across institutions and in particular the development of a 'common GIS' across municipal services

Clarify the Scope

CEPs can take different forms depending on financial resources, political support, and community willingness. In its simplest form, a CEP centers on a single project which is typically targeted at energy conservation and efficiency. In many cases, CEPs focus almost exclusively on downstream, demand-side activities such as building retrofits or public transit (see CMHC, 1999; Pitt & Bassett, 2013). At its most complex, a CEP builds from conservation (as the 'first fuel') to also consider local distribution and local supply. Comprehensive approaches are strongly endorsed by leading organizations such as QUEST, the Smart Prosperity Institute, and the Community Energy Association (GTI, 2016), Natural Resources Canada (see NRCan, 2007), and the United States Department of Energy (see DoE, 2013). Only a comprehensive plan can engage all of the drivers of structural change described earlier. Furthermore, comprehensive planning enables creative forms of system integration that have higher potential to achieve energy and emissions targets and ensure long-term community benefit (Garforth, 2009; St. Denis & Parker, 2009). The benefits of system integration are discussed in a [later section](#).

The decision to engage in a simple versus a comprehensive energy plan is often driven by financial resources. Based on experience across practitioners, a comprehensive plan is possible with a budget between \$100,000-250,000 (GTI, 2016). As a result of provincial funding and Council support, the resources available to Guelph's CEI Update Process fall well within this range.

Consider: scoping the CEI Update process as 'comprehensive' in nature

From Strategic Planning to Implementation Planning

The notion that energy systems will undergo 'disruptive' change is rarely an overstatement when considering the structural drivers of change described in [Section 1](#) of this report. One of the overall objectives of a CEP is to identify, understand and manage these disruptions for long-term community benefit. Framing CEPs in this way requires a shift in

focus *from innovation systems*, where the gaze is centered around the core functions of specific innovation networks or technologies and their ability to promote greener goods and services, *to system innovation*, where the gaze is broadened to consider interdependence across the institutions and infrastructures that constitute the fabric of society and the way we produce, distribute, and use energy. In order to address these challenges, many of the leading municipalities in Europe have adopted and adapted the ‘transition management’ approach to local energy planning (e.g., Loorbach and Rotmans, 2010; Frantzeskaki et al., 2012).

The transition management approach has three features. First, planning activities occur within a ‘transition arena’. A transition arena refers to a forum for so-called ‘community leaders’ to engage in focused discussion, separately from the forums in the political arena such as community events and Council proceedings. In other words, meeting minutes are not circulated publicly and City staff are available as resources and facilitators, not members. This principle has been implemented across Canada (GTI, 2016) as well as leading jurisdictions across the US (Pitt and Bassett, 2011) and Europe (Loorbach and Rotmans, 2010). The CEI Update Task Force epitomizes best practices here: supported by dedicated City staff to ensure long-term viability as voluntary members come-and-go, with clear terms of reference to ensure some level of direction and autonomy.

Experience to date demonstrates that ‘transition arenas’ lead to a higher likelihood for success for three reasons. First, the forum helps to drive the discussion forward, avoiding stalled visions and processes. Second, the forum brings many of the key ‘change agents’ into the room, since it by definition enrolls motivated community members (a self-selected group). Third, the forum is an efficient means of community engagement as forum members act as ‘channel partners’ to the broader community (as discussed in a [later section](#)). This third factor is critical – the legitimacy and effectiveness of recommendations and plans which emerge from the ‘transition arena’ are strongly tied to the nature and extent of community engagement.

Consider: the Task Force a ‘transition arena’ and an institutional back-bone for ongoing CEP development and implementation in Guelph (with membership turnover, of course).

Consider: parking tactical level conversations for a later date, and focusing instead on high-level strategic conversations such as visions and goals.

Consider further: beginning Phase 1 at the ‘monitoring and learning’ stage of the transition management approach as shown in Figure 1, which would involve using the targets and progress from CEI 2007 as a starting point rather than starting from scratch.

Second, the transition management approach unfolds in a series of planning exercises that move from strategic to operational activities (see Figure 1). Planning exercises begin with a long view, centering on visions and goals which define the alternative futures that are desired by the community. The tactical level conversations, whereby the intermediate

objectives and activities necessary to achieve those goals are defined, come later – in the terms of the Guelph CEI Update Process, in Phase 2 of the process. Tactical level conversations focus on activities at the level of subsystems that attempt to build up and break-down system structures (institutions, regulation, physical infrastructures, financial infrastructures and so on). Without being framed in the context of long-term strategic objectives, those tactical level conversations can be incoherent and inconsistent. Furthermore, framing tactical level conversations within a broader strategic vision helps to ensure more creative solutions that are not limited by (and in fact can focus on circumventing) existing institutional or infrastructural confines.

Third, the transition management approach is an exercise of governance – i.e., management by a combination of government and non-governmental actors. This is consistent with the discussion above, in terms of overcoming market and policy failure. This also implies varying roles for government, beyond their traditional regulatory role. A later report will provide more insight on the role that the municipal government can play and has played in CEP implementation across Canada.

Figure 1 below provides a generic structure to the process that will guide the Task Force’s activities throughout the Update process. Although depicted in sequence, many of these activities may happen in parallel. It is also important to note that activities are already occurring at later stages of this process. The Guelph Energy Efficiency Retrofit Strategy, for instance, is currently at the ‘Mobilizing’ stage. Figure 2 provides an example of outputs at early stages in this process, based on recent experiences in Durham Region (who are currently at the ‘Mobilizing’ stage). Figure 2 hopefully serves to clarify expectations at each stage of this process.

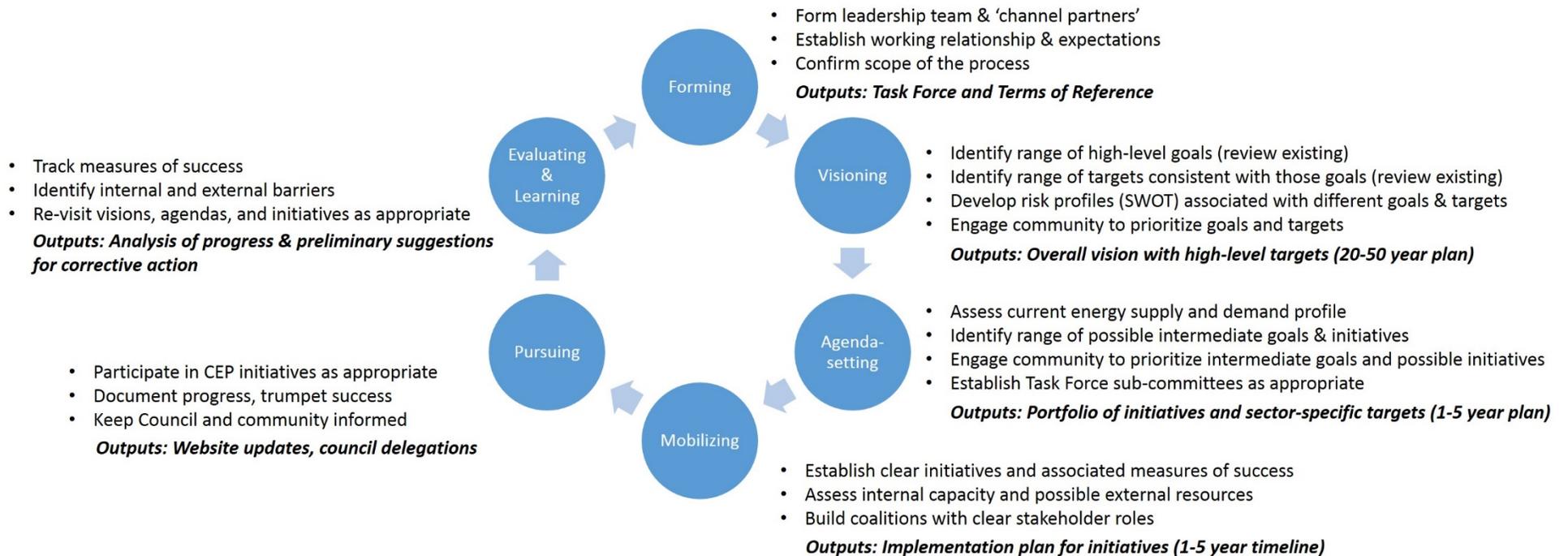


Figure 1: A strategic approach to community energy planning, the activities and outputs that might be expected of the Task Force. The approach described here is rooted in the principles of transition management (Loorbach and Rotman, 2010) and builds on experiences across North America as summarized by GTI (2016), USDOE (2013), and Natural Resources Canada (2007). The Guelph CEI Update process would end at the ‘mobilizing’ phase. The metrics used to measure success of the new CEI would be based on the implementation plan (either process or outcome indicators), not the high-level targets, since many of the factors which determine our ability to reach those aspirations are beyond the control of the community and the municipality. Although sub timelines are shown, these are not usually predetermined.

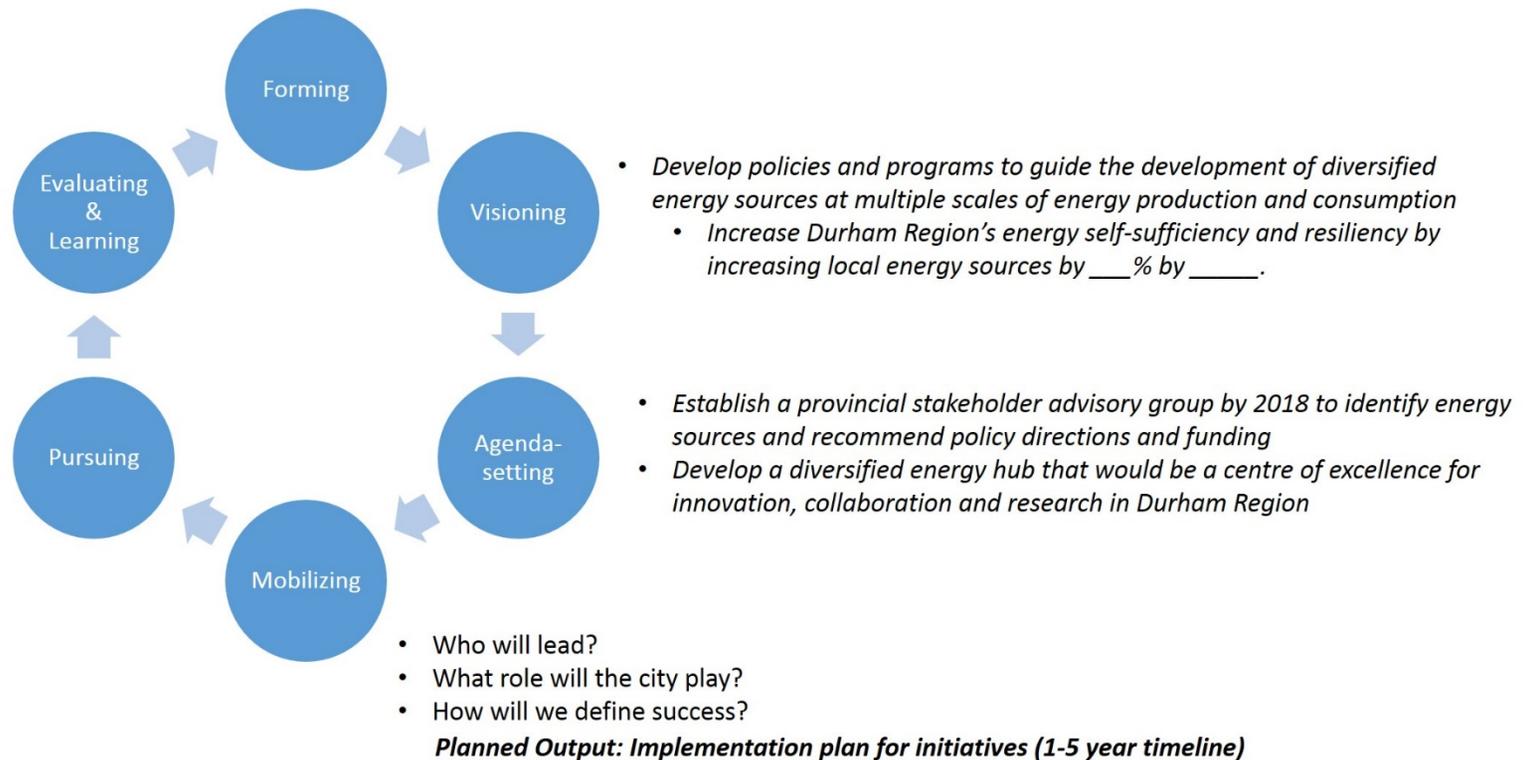


Figure 2: An example of how the process unfolded over the course of Durham Region's planning process, from high level goals in the visioning stage to more specific initiatives in the agenda-setting stage. Durham Region is currently at the 'mobilizing' stage, thinking through questions that will help them build an implementation plan.

Account for Interdependence through Integrated Energy Planning

Across Sectors and the Supply Chain

Energy planning processes are typically organized in terms of energy end-use sectors (e.g., buildings, mobility, waste, industrial activity). Once those sectors are defined, they may be further disaggregated (e.g., breaking down 'buildings' into 'residential', and then into 'multi-unit' vs. 'detached') and then characterized in terms of their energy profiles (e.g., electricity, heat, transport fuels). Sectoral disaggregation is critical in order to account for differences in regulatory frameworks, decision-making criteria, motivations, and barriers to act. For example, the range of alternative fuels that are economically viable in the heavy duty transport sector is much narrower than those available to the light duty sector; and the commercial, institutional and multiunit housing sectors provide an economy of scale for retrofit activities that bears lower hanging fruit for efficiency gains than the detached housing sector. These differences can only be considered with careful disaggregation and analysis. Furthermore, disaggregation helps to improve community engagement, as it establishes the basis upon which specific organizations and individuals can be understood and engaged throughout the process.

As opportunities to integrate infrastructural systems emerge, however, planning processes must follow suit. The possible electrification of the light duty vehicle fleet, for example, is encouraging the combination of electricity system planning with transport and land-use planning to ensure access to electric vehicle charging stations. Considerations to use compressed (renewable) natural gas in municipal vehicle fleets brings the transport sector into direct contact with the heating system and with feedstock systems such as agriculture and wastewater. The deployment of highly efficient cogeneration technologies requires careful consideration of heat and electricity markets and consumption patterns. District energy can take advantage of spatial proximity of cross-sector energy demands to maximize total energy efficiency.

In any case, as a matter of best practice, the planning arena should be broadened from single-sector strategies to system-level strategies (Jaccard et al., 1997; Garforth, 2009). There is a growing recognition that integrated energy planning and systems-level thinking will help to avoid 'lock-in' from sunk costs, and work toward system-level changes that help ensure long-term community benefit. Layering conservation objectives into local distribution and distributed generation opportunities have potential to dramatically reduce total energy consumption per capita and per unit of productivity, thereby reducing emissions while maximizing the economic performance of the energy system (Garforth, 2009; EDA, 2017). To achieve system-level change and capture the benefits of distributed energy resources, planning efforts and community discussions must cut across sectors.

Consider: Strategies (visions and agendas) that transcend sector-specific constraints
Consider further: the establishment of sub-committees as deemed appropriate to explore cross-sector synergies and conflicts that need to be addressed as part of an implementation plan (e.g., utility coordination committee; intermodal transport committee).

Across services and their respective planning divisions

The implementation of a CEP requires various degrees of municipal involvement to achieve success. There are two principal factors which shape the ability of a municipality to engage in CEP implementation. First is the municipal sphere of influence over energy systems, which will be discussed in Report 2. Second is the level of intra-municipal coordination, which we discuss briefly here.

Community energy plans are no longer about energy alone. Energy systems are increasingly seen as integral to outcomes in public health, land-use, economic development, social justice, and environmental sustainability. As such, CEPs are conceptualized as the start of a process by which energy systems are leveraged to achieve broader social, economic, and environmental goals. In practice, CEPs touch on, and in some cases are formally integrated with, plans to alleviate poverty, improve environmental performance, advance economic development, reduce municipal debt loads, improve public health, and other issue domains have some roots in the way energy is produced, distributed, and use (Koirala et al., 2016).

Energy plans must therefore be developed with these connections and interdependencies in mind (Sperling et al., 2011) and then implemented by way of embedding and coordinating the goals and principles of CEPs throughout Official Plans and Secondary Plans (Evenson et al., 2013). This, in turn, will help to ensure that the principles of CEPs filter through urban design as well as the delivery of municipal services such as water and waste management. Perhaps more importantly, integrated planning activities will help to ensure that the CEP does not impose unwarranted costs or constraints on health planning, land-use planning etc, and vice versa.

Across administrative units

CEPs are nested within a multi-scalar and interdependent system of institutions and energy infrastructure. Jurisdiction over key components of energy systems, such as energy generation and distribution infrastructure, is divided across levels of government. This multi-level governance context opens and closes (enables and disables) opportunities for the implementation of CEPs. Furthermore, infrastructure systems and energy markets operate outside of the control of any single community. The CEP cannot be limited by these constraints. Rather, the CEP process needs to be approached as an opportunity to explore ways to circumvent limits in the municipal sphere of influence.

Local energy systems are part of a much larger network of energy flows. And many of the renewable resources with which communities hope to achieve a more sustainable energy supply are accessible in rural areas. As such, regional and intermunicipal planning has become increasingly prominent in some European jurisdictions with longer histories of local energy planning. Common benefits include greater institutional capacity through combining resources, managing possible urban-rural tensions, and reaching economies of scale, and ensuring that plans coordinate rather than conflict, e.g. transport planning in common commuter-sheds. In some cases, regional plans develop due to a formal structural change in the governance system, as supported by higher orders of government either

through mandate, devolution of powers, or new resources. In other cases, regional planning is more organic. In these cases, regional planning can be driven by a common spatial identity and shared values that transcends municipal borders (e.g., Murau, an alpine district in Austria as described in Spath and Rohracher, 2010), a common experience of economic depression or stagnation that might be overcome through a regional approach to energy system management (e.g., Parkstad Limburg, a cooperation of 8 municipalities described in the Netherlands in Loorbach and Rotmans, 2010; an emerging 'green region' centered on Worcester, Massachusetts described in McCauley & Stephens, 2012); or recognition of the potential to be a powerful regional hub for innovations (e.g., the German cities of Emben and Bottrop, described in Mattes et al., 2015). All that said, the benefits of regional planning needs to be carefully discussed before any formal engagement, due to added time requirements and political dynamics that can make plan development and implementation challenging (Warbroek and Hoppe, 2017).

Consider: engaging with rural and regional counterparts as early as the agenda-setting stage (see Figure 1 below), before an implementation plan is established.

Alternatively, consider: engagement with rural and regional counterparts as an intermediate objective as part of an implementation plan.

Consider: the conditions under which Guelph and the Task Force might participate in inter-municipal energy planning (probably as part of implementation planning).

Consider further: identifying barriers and opportunities within Guelph's multi-level governance and infrastructural system at the agenda-setting stage, so that they are

Community Engagement

Community engagement helps to build networks, manage expectations and facilitate learning: all of which are widely recognized as the most important factors to achieving broad, system-level goals (Pitt and Bassett, 2013; Hoppe et al., 2015; C40, 2016; GTI, 2016). Community engagement builds on the principles of 'open government' but is much more. It needs to be recognized that the community is not being engaged *only* to provide their input into what the City should do with respect to energy planning. Rather, the community is being engaged to share in the vision that the CEP is trying to achieve, and to participate in the development of solutions that may not involve any direct government action at all. Research and experience has shown that smaller groups tend to focus much more on what government can and should do, while more creative solutions tend to emerge from larger groups (Koontz and Johnson, 2005). In other words, the process of community engagement establishes the basis for non-governmental action in energy system change. Furthermore, community engagement is an opportunity to connect CEPs to wider debates and values; if these are ignored and if communication breaks down throughout the process, even the most technically sound and economically rational plan is unlikely to be accepted or successful in the end (Garforth, 2009; Moss et al., 2015; GTI, 2016).

The 'why' for community engagement is intuitive, perhaps obvious. The more challenging question is 'when', 'how' and 'for what purpose'. History is replete with poor and often counter-productive community engagement and participatory governance strategies. Even in regions and municipalities with well-established legacies of local planning, collaborative planning tends to suffer from the 'same ten people' problem, whereby engagement never extends beyond easily motivated and directly vested citizens (Warbroek & Hoppe, 2017). The underlying problem is that so-called 'innovations' in community engagement focus primarily on techniques (e.g., focus groups vs. charrettes) which are often applied for the sake of 'checking a box' and political expediency. According to Bickerstaff and Walker (2001), community engagement strategies fall flat because they fail to consider the *purpose* of community participation in the first place, the *outcomes* that are needed from community engagement, and the *structural barriers to participation*. These issues can be addressed through a thoughtful engagement strategy.

Consider: developing a strategy for community engagement as early as possible, which specifies very clearly the timing with which the community will be engaged (see Figure 1), the intended outcome of those engagement activities, and how those outcomes will impact the Task Force's recommendations.

Consider further: using this strategy as a basis upon which to negotiate terms of reference for professionals that may be hired to lead these efforts.

Frameworks for Community Engagement

Community engagement strategies often combine community wide engagement activities with targeted engagement activities. Community wide engagement activities would include town-hall meetings, open houses, random surveys, or websites. Targeted engagement activities would include Task Force meetings, workshops with practitioner groups such as social housing providers or with special interest groups such as developers, or meetings with major institutional partners such as Guelph General Hospital or the University of Guelph.

In some cases, including ongoing CEP processes in Ontario, wider community engagement does not happen until after the plan has been established. This may be sufficient for a narrow CEP which focuses on a single or a small number of projects. It is not sufficient for comprehensive planning however. Experience shows that there is a very strong correlation between how a comprehensive plan was developed and the extent to which the plan achieves measurable success. If wider community debates and concerns are not engaged immediately, at the visioning stage, then the plan is likely to lack the legitimacy it requires to be implemented (Pitt and Bassett, 2013; Moss et al., 2015; GTI, 2016).

Furthermore, many of the changes required in the energy system suffer from demand-side issues (failure to adopt) and not supply side issues (e.g., home efficiency retrofits). Early engagement will help to ensure these demand-side issues are engaged early and often. At the initial stage of community engagement, the idea is not to coordinate the community around a set of specific issues and technologies, but to establish the CEP as a more general focal point for conversation about what a CEP will do, what (and who) it represents, and what might be expected from it.

Consider: community wide engagement activities at the visioning stage.

Consider further: the level of detail put forward to the community – at this stage and all stages – to balance (a) avoiding the impression that the plan has already been thought out and we are simply looking for an ‘accept’ or ‘reject’ response (b) proving enough substance to help spark and scope the discussion

A targeted approach is often useful at the agenda setting stage to assess concerns, identify significant barriers, gauge interest in a particular idea, and take stock of potential opportunities. Targeted approaches also help to understand willingness and motivations for engaging in proposed initiatives within specific sectors. All of this is critical to developing realistic intermediate objectives and effective implementation plans. The business community and institutional counterparts are especially critical here, as they bring resources and expertise and need to see value in possible initiatives that require private investment or public-private partnerships (C40, 2015).

Of course, both community wide and targeted engagement activities can be part of an implementation plan, rather than or in addition to the development of the plan itself. An excellent example of this is the GEERS program. The general concept emerged during plan development, while community engagement happened much later over the course of program design through a phone survey. This reduced the burden on time and resources of community-wide engagement in the planning phase, and helped to develop a more purposeful engagement process. In a follow-up report, the processes and tools used for community engagement will be discussed in more detail, based on a review of experiences among our peer communities.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

The highlights section at the beginning of this report provides a concise list of highlights from this report. The second report in this series (March 13) will provide a deeper analysis of experiences across peer communities in Ontario to provide insights on the following:

- Targets that have been set across other Canadian jurisdictions at the ‘visioning’ stage (see Figure 1)
- The specific tools and procedures used for community engagement
- The municipal sphere of influence
- The roles that a municipality can play in implementation and implementation planning

This second report will support our transition from the visioning to the agenda setting stage (see Figure 1). The third report in this series (late March) will analyze the policies and programs from provincial governments and agencies that can support Guelph’s CEP efforts. This will include recommendations on which and how to engage those opportunities, along with a high-level regulatory risk analysis. The third report will support the transition from agenda setting to implementation planning.

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