

Prepared for:  
**Halifax Regional  
Municipality**

## **Community Energy Plan**

### **Task 5 – Education and Awareness Programs**

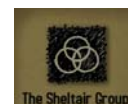
Final Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With Regional Council's approval in 2006, a consultant team began working with the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to develop a Community Energy Plan (CEP). The goal of the CEP was to create the way forward to a more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable community with a fundamental focus on energy. A key component of this plan was the implementation of education and awareness programs (Task 5), which are the focus of this report.

Education and awareness are important steps to ensuring the successful implementation of the CEP because completion of these steps ensures that the plan is understood and eventually adopted by the community. In collaboration with the HRM, the Project Team implemented a two-phase initiative to educate and build awareness of the CEP. This initiative was conducted concurrently with the development of the CEP and complemented the on-going stakeholder consultations. The first phase was not as large in scope as proposed due to budget constraints, but the initiative did focus on creating awareness of the CEP's processes and objectives within the HRM. The second phase, currently in effect, focuses on educating the public on the CEP through the development and maintenance of a website, <http://www.halifax.ca/environment/energyplan/>.

Interviews with senior staff within the HRM provided the Project Team with the opportunity to solicit the opinions of individuals who had expertise and knowledge on energy issues. Moreover, presentations to internal staff allowed the Project Team to build awareness on the CEP and offered HRM staff the opportunity to provide input on how the project could be beneficial and relevant to the work within their respective departments.

Linked from the HRM website, the CEP website is particularly beneficial as it charts the progress of the plan from the start of the project. It also provides up-to-date information on each of the deliverables, and ensures that the public has the opportunity to get informed. The CEP website also encourages the public to submit comments and provide feedback on the options considered. This feedback helps the Project Team refine the options and ensure that they reflect a diverse range of opinions.

The two-phase initiative and the public consultations have helped build awareness on the project, but a more aggressive campaign is recommended to successfully implement the CEP and to ensure buy-in from the public. A public outreach campaign that focuses on media awareness and influencing public attitudes and habits should be implemented. With an aggressive media awareness campaign in effect, the HRM can educate the public on not only the benefits of the CEP, but also on how the public can help to build a community based on sustainable environmental practices. A comparative matrix of possible public awareness tools has been developed for various target audiences within HRM. It is included in Appendix A of this report.

# 1 **DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNAL EDUCATION AND AWARENESS PROGRAM**

From the outset of the project, the Project Team ensured that internal HRM staff were informed about the CEP and understood the objectives and their implications on their work. As such, three key target audiences within the HRM were identified:

- Senior managers;
- Employees working on the project or directly influenced by it; and
- HRM employees at large.

Each of these three groups was given the opportunity to learn about the objectives of the CEP and the process that the Project Team would undertake to develop an effective plan.

## 1.1 **Interviews with Senior Managers**

Between January and March 2007, the project team conducted one-on-one interviews with senior managers from key departments within the HRM. These managers had direct responsibility or knowledge of energy issues within their respective departments. They were also participants in the stakeholder consultations.

Managers from the following departments were interviewed:

- Environmental Management Services;
- Transportation and Public Works;
- Engineering;
- Finance;
- Regional Planning;
- Planning and Development; and
- Legal Services.

In addition, regular updates on project progress were provided to the Energy and Underground Services (EUGS) Committee of Council for discussion and strategic direction.

A number of generic questions were developed as the basis for each interview and key questions centred upon the following topics:

- **Vision** – If the CEP is successful, what do you envisage would be in place in HRM either in the short term or the long term?
- **Priorities** – What priority issues or areas do you expect the CEP to consider? What are the priority actions that would make a significant difference to the energy production/use within the HRM? What criteria should be used to evaluate potential actions and determine priority actions?

- **Contributions** – What information/data/plans can you provide that would be useful to the CEP project team? What energy-related initiatives are currently on-going in your organization? Are you able/willing to commit resources to improve your energy performance?
- **Interactions** – What are the implications of your energy initiatives or other activities for the larger HRM community? What can other organizations do to help you achieve your energy goals or implement your plans? In particular, what could HRM do?

Responses to the above questions were recorded by the Project Team along with any additional information provided by the managers.

## **1.2 Presentations to HRM Staff**

One of the main priorities of the Project Team was to focus on educating HRM staff on the CEP and to encourage them to participate in the project. The aim was to get their buy-in on the process and the final plan. However, a comprehensive internal education and awareness program was not developed as proposed due to the time and budget constraints.

Given these factors, the Project Team designed and delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the staff from each of the functional areas where managers were interviewed. These presentations explained the objectives of the CEP, the project work plan, and the proposed deliverables. HRM staff was encouraged to ask questions and provide comments and suggestions to the Project Team. The presentation was also made available for distribution to additional staff at the HRM.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT OF A WEBSITE AND RELATED COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

The Jacques Whitford team created a series of communication tools to supplement the stakeholder and public consultations that were conducted from January to July 2007. These communication tools included briefing notes, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, displays for the Open House, advertisements for public meetings and more. The Project Team also developed the content for a project website to keep the public informed on the progress of the CEP.

### **2.1 The Project Website**

A key component of the public education and awareness program was the launch of the CEP interactive website, <http://www.halifax.ca/environment/energyplan/>. This method of communication was preferred, as detailed information could be posted quickly and updated frequently.

The aim of the CEP website was two-fold:

- To ensure that the public, including internal and external audiences, was informed about the project; and
- To provide the public with the opportunity to submit their input electronically.
- The CEP website was advertised in the Halifax Chronicle Herald and links to the website were provided in notices announcing the Open House, in briefing documents, in presentations and with invitations to public consultations.

### **2.2 Usability**

The CEP website was designed with a focus on usability. It was linked to the Environment section of the HRM website to ensure that it could be easily accessed by the public and would therefore not be “hidden” within the website. Additionally, each of the CEP webpages included a menu that linked to the main topics on the website.

### **2.3 Content**

Project team members worked with HRM staff to write the content for the CEP pages. Updates and links to recent fact sheets, summary reports and presentations were added on an on-going basis. These pages reflected the progress of the project and provided the public with current and relevant information.

These CEP webpages included the following topics:

- Background on the CEP for the HRM, including the objectives, the main deliverables, and timelines of the project;
- Public consultations;
- Energy resource assessment;
- Energy forecasting;
- Implementation plan; and
- Monitoring program.

The website was also used to advertise upcoming public consultations and invite the public to participate and get informed on the CEP. Minutes from these consultations were posted on the website for the public to easily download and review.

## **2.4 Public Participation**

Contact information of both an HRM staff member involved in the project as well as a member of the Project Team was provided on the website. The public was encouraged to ask questions and submit their comments on the project. With feedback from the public, the Project Team could revise and develop solutions that incorporated a diverse range of opinions.

## **2.5 Other Communication Tools**

Due to budget and time constraints, a comprehensive public outreach and education program was not developed, as was initially proposed. However, a public Open House was organized on March 28, 2007. At this event, a self-running PowerPoint presentation cycled through slides that presented background information on the project, and the approaches and outcomes of the project to date. In addition, topic tables were set up where each table focused on different goals of the CEP (land use planning, transportation, industry, infrastructure, buildings, alternative energy options, education and local government leadership), and provided examples of some of the potential actions that were being considered for the CEP. Participants were provided with handouts and encouraged to view displays, read the examples, and provide their comments or additions at each table. Public input was used to finalize the long list of potential actions and inform the selection of a short list

### 3 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Buy-in from the public is an essential element to ensure the successful implementation of the CEP. The Project Team has taken the initial step of building awareness of the project, through one-on-one interviews with managers, presentations to staff, and the website. However, more initiatives need to be developed moving forward.

An aggressive awareness program should be developed that targets HRM staff. We recommend an on-going campaign that includes the design and development of newsletter inserts, lunchtime awareness booths, information sessions, and other knowledge tools. With this aggressive campaign, the HRM can ensure that their staff become advocates of the project and understand how to use the CEP to complement the initiatives in their departments. The attached options matrix in the appendix of this report outlines some recommended tools for use in building awareness and educating HRM staff and the HRM community about the CEP goals and objectives.

It is also recommended that a comprehensive public outreach and education program be developed. The website provides the public with up-to-date information and background on the project; however, a more aggressive campaign needs to be designed that aims at changing public attitudes and behaviours, and stresses the importance of energy conservation in the HRM. As identified in our proposal, the Project Team suggests the development of a media awareness campaign that includes the design of media releases, information booths at local events, an online survey and other related communication tools. Further, we recommend that the Naturally Green newsletter be utilized to serve as the main method for getting information on the CEP to the HRM community. Since the production and distribution system for the newsletter is already in place, the cost to expand the newsletter to cover the CEP requirements should be modest.

In the same way that the CEP is a living document, education and awareness should be an on-going process. The public should not only be provided with background information, but also with information on the benefits anticipated from the CEP and how it will affect their daily lives. With this in place, the HRM can influence behaviours, effectively raising awareness and encouraging energy conservation.



## Appendix A

# **Inventory of Tools**

Communications Toolbox - Comparison Against Tools Inventory

#	Tool	Description and Purpose	Target Audience	Benefits and Drawbacks	Recommendations
1	Calendar Digest Format (8.5 x 11 folded)	Provides detailed information about energy programs. Cost \$0.25/unit on large print runs	All households	Small enough to act as a brochure or be saved like a pizza menu. Expires naturally so information isn't out of date.	Calendars are commonly used to provide residents with information on energy management or any other topic. Typically it is very well used. While we found reference to an "HRM Stewardship Calendar" we were unable to find it.
2	Calendar Large Format (8.5 x 11 folded)	Same as above but large format. Cost \$0.45 per unit on large print runs.	All households	Glossy, larger font, will be used as calendar.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Review the business case for a calendar or integrate into existing calendars on sustainability.
3	HRM Naturally Green Web Site	Found at www.halifax.ca under Naturally Green under Get Involved.	All households	Web site seems to have all of your information posted. If kept up to date it becomes the primary location of all information. <b>It isn't easy to find current site but it provides info in a consistent and easy to use manner.</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b> A web site becomes your most important tool because of its reach and your ability to always update it. It keeps the target audience and all contributors (e.g. volunteers, staff, etc.) up to date. Plan for regular updates.
4	CEP sticker	Development of stickers to recognize responsible businesses or homes.	Businesses, residents	Low cost and good brand opportunity.	<b>Recommendation:</b> If you decide to reward target audiences for changing behaviour, this could be part of a recognition program. For example in Ontario Bullfrog Energy stickers are popular and used by those who purchase this company's green power.
5	Magnets	Usually placed on a refrigerator, this provides the resident with critical info for a program.	Businesses, residents, staff	Square design eliminates waste; small; inexpensive; will be taken only by those who like magnets. No expiry though so they should not be used for time sensitive info.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Unless you have something specific to communicate this approach doesn't seem to fit the CEP program.
6	Information in the telephone directory	Information used to promote sustainability programs printed in the phone book.	Businesses, residents	Useful information, automatically updated every year and all businesses and residents receive it. Need to promote the fact that it is available.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Unlikely to make sense if only used for the CEP program. However, CEP info could be a part of a broader approach.
7	Toll-free hotline (1-800 or 311)	Many municipalities use this as a way of communicating on waste and other environmental issues.	Businesses, residents	Comforting for residents to know that the information they seek is just one phone call away.	<b>Recommendation:</b> It is hard to find telephone contact info for Naturally Green. On the other hand it is unlikely that there would be many calls on the CEP so this may be overkill in terms of a solution.

Communications Toolbox - Comparison Against Tools Inventory

#	Tool	Description and Purpose	Target Audience	Benefits and Drawbacks	Recommendations
8	Naturally Green Newsletter	The newsletter is an electronic tool for keeping businesses and residents up to date	Businesses, residents, staff	Cost effective, easy to do, existing infrastructure.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Draft up article for upcoming newsletter. Have a regular section in newsletter from now on highlighting one or more aspects of the CEP.
9	Participation Sticker	Sticker to indicate that someone has participated in an event that promotes CEP	Visitors to events	Cost effective, may cause others to ask about the sticker.	<b>Recommendation:</b> This is a good supplement to any information booth at a larger event, e.g. a Home Show, as it attracts other visitors.
10	Participation Stamper	Same as above but uses a pre-made stamp and an ink pad	Kids	Kids love stampers. Would not work as well with parents.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Use it in conjunction with stickers.
11	Community Volunteer Group	Community volunteer group to support labour intensive activities, e.g. staffing a display or door to door visits	Businesses, residents, staff	Will help ease problem of requiring resources. Volunteer organization can be challenging.	<b>Recommendation:</b> May be overkill just for promotion of CEP but could work as a tool to promote a broader suite of Naturally Green services.
12	Displays	Displays at community events and locations to promote actions in support of CEP. Could be staffed or set-up without staff to monitor.	Businesses, residents, staff	Proactive, face to face. Good way to 'check the pulse' of the community and secure feedback. Good way to distribute take home communications materials.	<b>Recommendation:</b> This is likely a good idea depending on budget. If you decide to get volunteer help, this is an excellent tool.
13	Use Bulletin Boards on HRM Property	Promote CEP actions using bulletin boards on HRM property, e.g. ice rinks, community centres, seniors residences, etc.	Residents, staff	If you have bulletin boards this is cost effective.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Use the bulletin boards that you have. Use a clear poster to communicate.
14	Kits for School Kids	Product would allow teachers to complete an interesting unit on energy as a part of the science curriculum.	School age kids	Proactive, face to face, targets next generation. Should also change family behaviour. Good materials will cost money to develop.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Doing this depends on what interaction HRM has had with school boards in the past. The bulk of the costs would be 'once only' (design, development of program) with some ongoing costs (printing, distribution). If done properly, materials could be done for Grade 1, Grade 6 and Grade 11 or similar spread. If interested, form a committee of local teachers and try to leverage existing material so that it can also be used for public education and training for staff.
15	Message from the CAO	A memo or email going to all municipal staff from the CAO or other top manager to communicate the importance of corporate CEP actions	Staff	It gives corporate CEP initiatives more weight and importance. But it needs to be short and sweet and cannot provide very much practical detail. Needs to be complemented by further information.	<b>Recommendation:</b> Use communication from the CAO as a first step in engaging HRM staff in corporate energy initiatives that require their cooperation. Complement this with printed resources of presentations.

Communications Toolbox - Comparison Against Tools Inventory

#	Tool	Description and Purpose	Target Audience	Benefits and Drawbacks	Recommendations
16	Departmental Sustainability Coordinators	A sustainability coordinator can be a volunteer within each department at HRM who helps to disseminate information about energy campaigns among colleagues.	Staff	People may respond better to a colleagues within own department who promotes a sustainability initiative. There needs to be an overall coordinator who feeds information/communication tools to the sustainability coordinators otherwise this will be a demanding volunteer responsibility.	<b>Recommendations:</b> Search for people within each of HRM's departments who may be willing to act as a sustainability coordinator. Provide them with tools and information (e.g. calendars, stickers, magnets etc described above as well as templates for emails they can send their colleagues with energy saving tips etc) that they can help disseminate among staff.