

Renewable Energy For Everyone

By Joanna Burris

With a plan of renewable energy for everyone, there are a wide variety of options, which will help get Colchester to “net zero” emissions by 2050.

Net-metering solar photovoltaic (PV) installed on new and existing buildings

DEPLOY NET-METERED SOLAR PROJECTS ON MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS - By generating renewable electricity on-site, municipal buildings will be able to produce clean electricity to

meet some or all of the energy needs of the buildings. This should be paired with building retrofits to ensure that solar arrays are not oversized for the energy demands of the building.

10 MW of ground-mount solar PV installed from 2030-2045

INCORPORATE RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PLAN - Policies to allow for the smooth and simple expansion of renewable electricity infrastructure across the

municipality will reduce barriers and hasten the reduction of emissions associated with electricity use in Nova Scotia. These policies should allow for the development of community solar gardens and wind generation cooperatives, which would allow all members of a community to benefit from the switch to renewable electricity.

CREATE A SOLAR GARDEN - In the same way a community garden allows all members of a community to grow their own food, a

community-scale solar generation facility would allow a community to generate its own renewable electricity. As a community project, local residents would invest in the facility, which would allow them to generate their own electricity, increase their resilience, and lower their emissions. By pooling resources, the community members would be able to reduce the costs associated with installing a solar PV system and share the costs of maintenance and operation.

An important part of the plans is to generate 2 MW per year of wind or tidal generation installed annually

District energy system in Tatamagouche

DEVELOP ZERO EMISSIONS DISTRICT ENERGY IN COMMUNITY HUBS (E.G. TATAMAGOUCHE) - District energy systems allow for the efficient use of energy in dense built areas. By concentrating energy generation for space heating and cooling in a single system and circulating the heat and cooling to nearby buildings, the connected buildings can collectively use less energy than if they each had their own independent heating and cooling systems. District energy systems can use waste heat from other activities, such as wastewater treatment, to power the system and circulate the result through connected buildings as either steam or hot water.

Energy storage for renewable energy RNG capture and use

DEVELOP A BIOGAS FACILITY AT THE LANDFILL - Organic matter decomposition produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas in the near term. If captured, this gas can become a local source of energy and a sustainable alternative to natural gas.

Procurement of renewable electricity from outside of the municipality also provides stimulus to achieve 2050 targets.



Molen Services installation professionals, Peter MacGillivray, left, and Kyle Chisholm are shown during the installation of rooftop panels. (Submitted)

How long before you get your investment back and start seeing “FREE” power?



There are a few factors that come into play for example your over all power consumption, orientation and size of your roof, shading from trees or structures and your current electrical service size. What we focus on is your return on investment and try to build you a system that best benefits you. That all being said some systems could be paid for in as little as 5 years it just depends on all those factors.

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How Do We Achieve a Carbon-Free Colchester?

By Joanna Burris

The consulting team for the Community Energy & Emissions Plan identified five key focus areas for implementation through a combination of public consultation and technical modelling. These focus areas include:

- Affordable, zero-emissions buildings
- Zero-emissions transportation
- Renewable energy for everyone
- An empowered community
- A path to zero for business

There will be some overlap between the programs in each of the focus areas, as well as between program areas themselves. If implemented systematically, the programs will support one another. For example, building retrofits increase the impact of solar PV installations by ensuring that there is more clean electricity for electric vehicles.

A variety of implementation mechanisms will be needed to tackle each focus area, including policies, programs, infrastructure, initiatives, and the Municipality leading by example, such as by retrofitting its facilities or converting its fleet vehicles to electric. The following section describes the low-carbon actions planned for each of the above focus areas, as well as the implementation strategies needed to complete each action.

An empowered community section includes: Colchester low-carbon roundtable with working groups on education, industry, agriculture; focus Colchester’s Economic Development Strategy on climate action; create an energy corporation in partnership with other municipalities; develop community bonds for financing low-carbon actions in partnership with credit unions and develop educational programs with museums and art galleries.

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