

Climate Action and Energy Plan (CAEP) Summary

Adopted by Council February 2013

The overwhelming majority of scientists agree that rising concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are caused by human activities. As a result, this plan is a response to local concerns about human-caused climate change and its current and potential effects.

The CAEP recommends actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and alter how energy is produced and used in this community. At the same time, it advocates measures to lessen climate change impacts.

The idea of a green economy is “a system that will result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental and ecological risks and financial scarcities”. We need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and the goal of this plan is an 80% reduction by 2050.

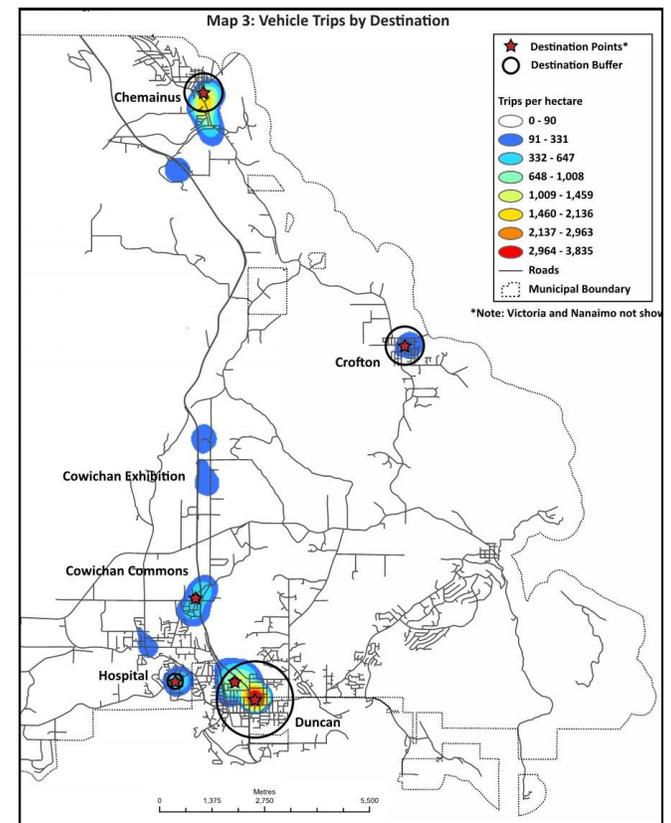


Background

Impacts of weather events in 2010 brought the second-highest number of loss-related weather catastrophes since insurance records began in 1980. And, the Stern Review, submitted to the UN in 2006, estimates that if action is not taken, climate change costs will be at least 5% of the global economy each year, now and forever – and this

could rise to 20% or more. In contrast, the costs reducing greenhouse gas emissions can be around 1% per year.

As an example, BC forest fire records show that the wildfire season has been increasing in length by one to two days a year since at least 1980 - causing large increases in expenses. In North Cowichan alone,



damages from GHG emissions from all sources are already estimated at between \$4 million and \$32 million.



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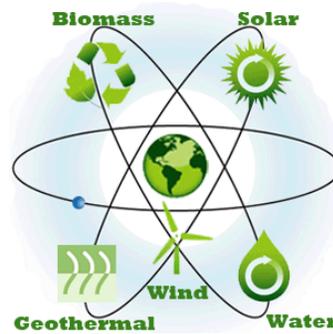
Plan Summary continued

This green plan will require both municipal and private-sector investments. But ultimately, it is predicted to have a net financial benefit. By implementing this plan, we will reduce energy costs, create new jobs, and reduce the climate change impact burden on future generations. For example, increased housing density will lead to lower transportation and household energy costs - resulting in both GHG reduction and a financial savings to each household.

Achieving GHG emissions reduction targets will create 613 annual jobs: 200 jobs in construction; 242 in renewable energy; 48 in retrofits (home improvement); 7 in district energy; 25 in recycling; 20 in waste management; 63 in

agriculture; and 8 in forestry.

Achieving substantial GHG reductions will require a major effort; most specifically, by the community's acceptance of the need to increase housing density. The plan's economic model shows that a 'dense' scenario' would cost 25% less to build, would be cheaper to operate and maintain, and its water and wastewater systems would cost 55% less than in the 'dispersed' scenario'. Similar savings were found for road construction, transit costs, fire stations, recreation centres and schools.



In terms of energy alone, North Cowichan will save about \$130 million if we achieve the 80% reduction of our carbon emissions by 2050 – resulting in a saving of \$4,000 per household in today's dollars. So while implementation of these recommendations will require a great effort by both the public and politicians, the rewards will be substantial and include new employment, cost savings for each household, healthier lifestyles and a more resilient community.

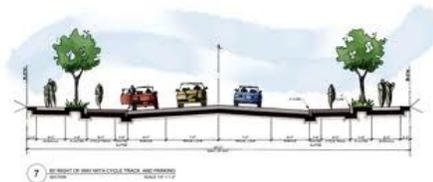
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of North Cowichan with its mix of rural and urban centres, opportunities for land-use change are limited, placing increased pressure on fuel switching from gasoline and diesel vehicles to electric. In the residential dwellings, the slow turnover of the building stock

"We now have a strategic and systematic plan that will assist North Cowichan residents and businesses in implementing initiatives to save energy, money and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions--a win, win, win approach," said Mayor Jon Lefebure.

means that a substantial portion of the existing building stock will need retrofits; for example, switching from natural gas and heating oil to electricity. Low carbon electricity is also critical. And, while electricity use in the short term will

increase, its long term use needs to decrease.



SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a Transportation Planning Program that includes:

A comprehensive program to encourage transportation behaviour change.

An effective transit system for low-density areas.

Increasing community biodiesel purchases and municipal fleet biodiesel use.

Join Project Get Ready and transition the Municipal fleet to electric vehicles

Ensure strict implementation of the official community plan development policies and guidelines

Enforce urban containment boundaries and increase housing density.

Employ new powers under Bill 27 to support municipal renewable energy projects.

Implement a community solar energy program for a large scale deployment.

Establish a community energy utility.

Reduce municipal building energy use and increase their energy efficiency.

Create an Agricultural Development Centre to encourage the production of local food.

Increase North Cowichan's tree cover.

Establish a Green Revolving Loan Fund