



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
 General Manager - Community Services
Re: **Solar Community Application**

Date: March 30, 2010
File:

Staff Recommendation

1. That a letter from the Mayor, outlining the City of Richmond's intent to become to become a Solar Community, be sent to the SolarBC Program (SolarBC) in support of the City's application to be selected as a new BC Solar Community.
2. That a copy of the Solar Community Application Form be forwarded to Richmond School District No. 38 for information.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
 General Manager - Community Services
 (604-276-4068)

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Development Applications.....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy Planning	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Facilities & Project Development.....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Communications.....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ACTING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The City has been encouraged by SolarBC¹ to apply to become a Solar Community. In order to apply for this designation, a resolution supporting the application needs to accompany the application. In April 2008, Council adopted the Term Goal “to demonstrate leadership in and significant advancement of the City’s agenda for sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy that includes a variety of outcomes including:

- Initiatives that reduce our carbon foot print and move us towards carbon neutral.
- Ensuring our civic buildings are energy efficient
- Initiate and incorporate sustainability into our City policies and bylaws.”

This project helps to achieve this Term Goal.

Analysis

What is SolarBC and what do they do?

The Solar Communities Project is a part of the SolarBC Program (www.solarbc.ca) run by the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association, which has a goal of transforming the market for solar hot water (SHW) systems in BC by increasing the accessibility, affordability and practicality for citizens and communities across the province. This Provincially funded organization seeks to add six Solar Communities to the nine Solar Communities that are in place.² Richmond aims to be one of these six.

What is a Solar Community?

A Solar Community promotes solar energy as a renewable resource by:

- ◇ acting as a flagship community and providing leadership to community members;
- ◇ helping to develop means to remove barriers to SHW installations;
- ◇ helping to promote and raise awareness of SolarBC to community members, and;
- ◇ providing visible solar demonstration projects.

What obligations does ‘Solar Community’ status confer on the City?

As Solar Community, Richmond will be expected to promote the uptake of solar hot water heating across the community for a period of one year. Successful applicant communities will be notified during Solar Days (May 28-29, 2010). Promotional activities will entail, among other things:

- ◇ working toward residential SHW installation targets
- ◇ linking to the SolarBC website
- ◇ staff and community awareness raising

¹ SolarBC is a program of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA) in collaboration with Eaga Canada Services Inc. The SolarBC Program is funded through a \$5 million grant from the Province of British Columbia. An additional commitment of up to \$1.6 million as rebates upon installation has been secured from Natural Resources Canada.

² Existing Solar Communities include: Dawson Creek, Kelowna, Saanich, Tofino, T’Sou-ke First Nation, District of North Vancouver, Vancouver, West Moberly First Nation and Whistler.

- ◊ leveraging of other projects (e.g. Community Energy & Emissions Plan, Solar Potential Evaluator Project³, etc.) to increase the adoption of SHW heating in the community.

There are no requirements to report out to SolarBC on activities undertaken under this initiative. Assuming they are in line with Richmond’s development goals, Richmond will sign up for the Provincial Solar Ready guidelines, when these become available. The City will also promote SHW systems through its website and consultation work being undertaken as part of the ongoing Community Energy and Emissions Plan. Solar Community activities will be managed through Sustainability Services and existing resources of the Community Energy Manager.

What actions will the City of Richmond undertake as a Solar Community?

Staff propose that a variety of activities be undertaken to support its designation as Solar Community. A description of these activities is shown below:

Activity	Description	Delivery Agent
Solar Roofs Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ 11 residential homes by 2011 ◊ 2% of single family homes by 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager ◊ Development Applications
Awareness raising about SHW systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Information session for City staff ◊ Promote participation in the SolarBC Residential Program ◊ Linking to SolarBC website ◊ Disseminate information via building permit application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager ◊ Communications ◊ Development Applications
Encourage SHW system installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Commercial/institutional buildings and schools ◊ Organize SHW information session for residents ◊ Facilitate site visits to existing SHW installations ◊ Encourage Terasen Gas to invest in SHW heating for common areas of MURBS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager
Demonstration project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Make efforts to install a SHW demonstration project on at least one local government building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager ◊ Facilities
Policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Investigate the feasibility of policy, planning, bylaws and/or other legal tools and permitting processes to facilitate SHW systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager ◊ Policy Planning
Leveraging of ongoing projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Capitalize on resources and expertise involved in the Community Energy and Emissions Planning process, and the <i>Solar Potential Evaluator</i> research project⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Sustainability - Community Energy Manager

³ This is a research proposal to NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council) that Richmond is collaborating on.

How will the Solar Community Initiative be managed?

Oversight and management for this initiative will be provided via Sustainability Services (existing resources of the Community Energy Manager) with implementation activities supported by staff from Communications, Facilities Services, and Planning and Development.

Next Steps

To keep the City's participation open, City staff will submit the SolarBC Solar Community Application by the March 31, 2010 deadline. The Council Resolution in support of the application, can be submitted at a later date and still be considered as part of the application package. SolarBC has been advised of this scheduling and has approved the City's approach.

Financial Impact

If selected as a Solar Community, the City of Richmond will be eligible to receive a \$5,000 grant from SolarBC. This funding would be used to deliver a training workshop for staff, a solar workshop for residents, and provide educational resources for the community in regards to SHW heating.

Conclusion

As a leader among municipalities in the province, the City of Richmond is interested in exploring the potential for solar hot water heating for its Corporate buildings as well as for the community as a whole. This strategic initiative helps to reduce the community's reliance on fossil fuels, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and enhances community energy security. Pursuing solar energy as an energy source also represents an opportunity to slow the outflow of local wealth to energy suppliers in other parts of the province, country or globe.



Alastair Moore, MCIP
Community Energy Manager
Sustainability
Community Services Department
(604.247.4670)

⁴ Richmond has been invited to collaborate on a UBC-led solar research project proposal called, 'Solar Energy Evaluator Project'. Participating in this 3-year research project can help to raise awareness about site-specific, and neighbourhood-scale solar installations.