Public Feedback on the Draft Plan

November 1st - December 17th, 2018

Online Survey

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Durham Community Energy Plan is intended stimulate innovation in the local economy, create local employment and achieve social benefits while accelerating the transition to a clean energy economy in Durham. The DCEP aims to improve overall energy efficiency, reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, and encourage green clean solutions at the local level. The Durham Community Energy Plan is a plan for our energy future and a key component of climate change mitigation in Durham Region.

Between November 1st and December 21st an online survey was made available for the public to provide feedback on the Draft Durham Community Energy Plan (DCEP). The online survey was hosted on the Region of Durham's DCEP web page. Respondents were asked to review the Draft DCEP Summary, the Draft DCEP Plan and Draft DCEP Technical Document prior to completing the survey. The survey was promoted on the back of printed copies of the Draft DCEP Summary and via the Region of Durham's Newsroom webpage and social media platforms including Twitter and Facebook.

The questions for this survey were developed in conjunction with two in-person stakeholder sessions that were held on Thursday, November 22, 2018 in Whitby, Ontario.

Scope

The DCEP covers the entire geography of the Durham Region. It includes all forms of energy: electricity, natural gas, gasoline, diesel, fuel oil, nuclear power, biomass, solar, wind, coal etc. It covers all stages of the energy cycle: energy generation, transmission, storage and use. The Plan covers all sectors of the Durham economy: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural and transportation.

Timeframe

The timeframe for the DCEP is the period from 2015 (the base year) to 2050. This 35-year period is enough time to completely replace the energy infrastructure in Durham with clean alternatives.

Purpose

The online survey was created to gather feedback on the Draft DCEP

Survey Questions

A total of 26 people participated in the online survey. The survey included the following questions

1) Where do you think our energy in Durham Region comes from now? (percentage)
2) What are the top three energy-related issues in Durham Region? (Short Answer)
3) What Durham future energy scenario do you support? (percentage)
4) How important is it to ensure new homes are energy efficient? (0-100)
5) How important is it for commercial buildings to be energy efficient? (0-100)
6) How easy will it be to retrofit existing homes in Durham to be more energy efficient? (0-100)
7) How easy will it be to retrofit commercial and industrial buildings to be more energy efficient? (0-100)
8) How important is it to transition from non-renewable to renewable energy? (0-100)
9) How important is it to expand public transportation? (0-100)
10) How challenging will it be to switch to electric public transit buses? (0-100)
11) How important is it to improve cycling and walking infrastructure?
12) How important is it to increase ridesharing? (0-100)
13) Should Durham Region have areas where cars are not permitted? (0-100)
14) If you were looking for a new car, what would stop you from purchasing an electric vehicle?
15) Who else needs to be involved in implementing the Durham Energy Plan?
16) Stakeholders believe that the Low Carbon Pathway will be the greatest benefit to Durham Residents. What would encourage you to support the Low Carbon Pathway?
17) Why would you not support the Low Carbon Pathway?
18) How urgent is the need to transition to a low-carbon future? (0-100)
19) Do you have any other comments or concerns about the Draft Durham Community Energy Plan?

Key Messages

The following key messages about the Draft DCEP were revealed by the online survey:

1) Respondents have an inaccurate understanding about the sources of energy consumed in Durham Region which overestimates the contribution electricity (including nuclear power) and significantly underestimates the amount of

petroleum and natural gas energy consumed in the Region (average respondent estimates were Nuclear 42%, Gas/Oil 28%, Hydro 22%, Wind 4.5%, Solar 6%).

2) Respondents believe that the top energy concerns in Durham are related to:
    a. the reliance on sources of energy that pollute the environment (12 mentions)
    b. the cost of energy (10 mentions)
    c. a need for more efficient energy use (6 mentions)
    d. a lack of energy supply choices (4 mentions)
    e. the reliability of energy supply (3 mentions)
    f. the lack of consideration for rural residents (2 mentions)
    g. market volatility (2 mentions)
3) 88% of respondents support the Low Carbon Pathway future energy scenario, which promotes an accelerated transition to non-carbon emitting energy production alternatives.
4) It is very important for homes to be energy efficient (94/100).
5) It is very important commercial buildings to be energy efficient (94/100).
6) It will be moderately easy to retrofit existing homes in Durham (50/100).
7) It will be moderately easy to retrofit commercial and industrial buildings in Durham (55/100).
8) It is important to transition from non-renewable to renewable energy (86/100).
9) It is relatively important to expand public transportation (74/100).
10) It will be relatively easy to switch to electric public transit busses (39/100).
11) It is important to improve cycling and walking infrastructure (75/100).
12) Respondents feel neutral about increasing ridesharing (61/100).
13) Half of all respondents feel that Durham Region should have car-free areas.
14) Several factors would discourage respondents from purchasing an electric vehicle including:
    a. High purchase price and cost of home charger and electricity (19 mentions)
    b. Lack of charging infrastructure (9 mentions)
    c. Limited range compared to internal combustion engine vehicles (4 mentions)
    d. Lack of government support/rebates (3 mentions)
    e. Unknown reliability (2 mentions)
    f. The pollution associated with making EV batteries (1 mention)
    g. Vehicle size (1 mention)

h. Lack of availability at local car dealerships (1 mention)
i. Low resale value (1 mention)

15) Respondents believe that several groups of people/organizations need to be involved in implementing the DCEP including:
    a. Residents of Durham Region (12 mentions)
    b. The Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments (5 mentions)
    c. Automotive companies (specifically for infrastructure to help with electric/hybrid/hydrogen vehicle recharging stations) (3 mentions)
    d. Developers and home-builders (2 mentions)
    e. Post-secondary institutions (1 mention)
    f. Chambers of Commerce (1 mention)
    g. International experts (1 mention)
    h. Energy suppliers (1 mention)
    i. The agriculture sector (1 mention)
16) There are several factors that would encourage residents to support the Low Carbon Pathway presented in the DCEP. These include:
    a. Financial incentives such as rebates for retrofits, electric vehicles (4 mentions)
    b. Municipal leadership (3 mentions)
    c. More information that clearly outlines the benefits of the LCP (3 mentions)
    d. Minimal negative impacts on businesses, taxes or jobs (3 mentions)
    e. Promote environmental benefits (3 mentions)
    f. Seeing the LCP strongly endorsed by political and business leaders (3 mentions)
    g. Limited cost to the individual (2 mentions)
    h. Demonstrated job opportunities. (2 mentions)
    i. Business incentives (1 mention)
    j. Make it simple to participate and easy to understand (1 mention)
    k. Proof that the LCP will be implemented effectively and for the benefit of everyone (1 mention)
    l. Highlight the benefits of LCP for future generations (1 mention)
    m. Fun community engagement activities (1 mention)
17) There are several reasons respondents would not support the LCP. These include:

a. High costs (11 mentions)
b. If the DCEP is implemented ineffectively (3 mentions)
c. Unambitious timelines to achieve the goals outlined in the DCEP (1 mention)
d. Lack of clarity about how to implement the DCEP (1 mention)
e. Utilizing unproven methods and technologies (1 mention)
f. Doubts about the benefits to the economy (1 mention)

18) Respondents feel that a transition to a low-carbon future is very urgent (87/100).
19) Respondents had several other comments about the Draft DCEP.
    a. The DCEP should consider new bylaws pertaining to housing construction in the future to require roofing practices involving the installation of solar panels or other eco-friendly materials or infrastructure.
    b. The DCEP should consider both urban and rural areas of Durham.
    c. The public needs to be made aware of the DCEP for it to be successful.
    d. The DCEP could be reformatted for the internet to make it more interactive and easier to understand.
    e. Some of the ideas in the DCEP seem unrealistic.
    f. Programs to implement the DCEP could include reducing waste in packaging that is burned in the York-Durham waste to energy facility and reducing radiant heat by eliminating dark surface roofs, roads, driveways etc.
    g. More detail is needed around how the DCEP will be implemented

Next Steps

The DCEP and implementation programs will be revised in early 2019 based on all input received from stakeholders and the public. The goal is to seek Regional Council approval in principle by April 2019 and seek local municipal and utility endorsement shortly after in 2019. Implementation of the Plan would start in 2019.

Appendix A: Durham Community Energy Plan Partners