



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Clean Energy Transition Initiative - Update

From: Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Date: January 23, 2025

Report Number: CDO-2025-001

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

The new Clean Energy Transition Initiative will be launched in Bruce County with the aim of supporting local businesses in transitioning to using clean energy in their day-to-day operations. The program will be building connections between businesses, enabling companies and funding organizations to drive energy transition projects and attract investment. Launching in 2025, it will run until September 2026 and provide guidance, resources and training while fostering partnerships and innovation.

Background/Analysis:

In February 2024, staff submitted an application for funding through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund Program to support the development of a Clean Energy Transition Project. Staff received notification that the application was successful and that \$150,000 would be provided over a 24-month period for the program's development. In June 2024, Council approved entering into the agreement; however, at that time, details of the program could not be released.

The project is now underway, and a Clean Energy Transition Specialist has been hired on contract to support the initiative, with their role beginning in January 2025. There are a number of components to the overall program, including the development of an Energy Transition Cluster and support of an industry-led hydrogen hub. However, the primary focus will be the development of the Clean Energy Transition Initiative. The following report outlines the high-level framework of the initiative, which is designed to drive further investment in Bruce County.

For the purposes of this program, energy transition is defined as the move from higher carbon-intensive energy sources (e.g., fossil fuels) to lower carbon-intensive energy sources (e.g., clean & renewable sources). Projects focused exclusively on energy efficiency (i.e., reducing energy usage) are not included in this project.

Overview

The Clean Energy Transition Initiative will provide dedicated support to businesses in Bruce County to encourage and support their transition to using clean energy. To support this process, the program will develop relationships with three categories of organizations:

1. Interested Local Businesses;
2. Suppliers of Clean Energy Technology and Services; and
3. Funding and Support Organizations.

Each category of organization will receive a tailored set of supports, all intended to encourage energy transition.

Interested Local Businesses

Interested local businesses will have access to the following supports at no cost:

1. **Guidance and Support** - The Energy Transition Specialist will act as a centralized consultant for local businesses, offering support on regulations, best practices, financial incentives, certifications, and other opportunities. This includes grant-writing support for energy transition projects.
2. **Energy Transition Planning** - The initiative will assist in developing formal energy transition or business plans to support investments made by local businesses.
3. **Resources and Tools** - Toolkits will be developed and utilized to help businesses understand opportunities, return on investment, carbon intensity, and current policies at all levels of government.
4. **Training and Education** - Workshops, training sessions, and skill development opportunities will be available for businesses interested in energy transition projects.

Suppliers of Clean Energy Technology and Services, Funding, and Support Organizations

Suppliers of Clean Energy Technology and Services, Funding, and Support Organizations will be encouraged to participate through the following supports:

1. **Direct Connections** - Networking and connection opportunities will be provided to link these organizations with local businesses interested in energy transition projects.
2. **Partnership Development** - Many local companies already possess the skills and product lines to support energy transitions. Partnership development will further enhance their capacity to support this transition.
3. **Access to Innovation** - The Energy Transition Initiative will attract innovative companies looking for solutions. Participating organizations and companies will be well-positioned to find test environments and pilot project opportunities in Bruce County.

In addition to these supports, all participants will benefit from increased marketing and promotion efforts as part of associated investment attraction initiatives. It is anticipated that program successes will be showcased throughout the program's duration and leveraged to attract additional investment in Bruce County's energy sector.

The Energy Transition Initiative will be available to all County businesses starting February 1, 2025, and will run until September 30, 2026.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

The Energy Transition Initiative does not provide direct financial support to businesses. Administration of this program is funded by the Rural Economic Development grant provided by the Government of Ontario and through the Economic Development departmental reserve.

Web and Marketing materials are in development and the initiative will have a dedicated space on County websites.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

N/A

Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

Environment and Climate Change - Build capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change

Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:

This initiative directly supports the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

Approved for Submission:

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer