

Municipality of Colchester
Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee
Terms of Reference

1. Vision

The Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee will advise the Municipality by assisting staff to set priorities for implementing the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

2. Community Energy & Emissions Plan Background

The [Community Energy & Emissions Plan](#) (CEEP) provides a pathway to transition the Municipality to renewable energy and to reduce Colchester’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between now and 2050. It sets a target for net-zero emissions in the community by 2050, meaning that the region either releases no GHGs or offsets the emissions it does release. The Plan outlines the measures the Municipality, businesses, and residents need to take to achieve deep emissions reductions. The Plan also explores how these measures can be funded, their economic benefits, and the governance structure and policies required for success.

The CEEP was developed by consultants Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG), with guidance from municipal staff, public engagement, and the Carbon-Free Colchester Advisory Committee. This original Committee consisted of residents of Colchester; local business owners; staff from adjacent local governments; staff from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq and QUEST; representatives from the Living Earth Council and NS Power; stakeholders from the forestry, fuel, and construction industries; and two Colchester Councillors. Council approved the CEEP in February 2022.

The implementation pathway proposed in the CEEP focuses on five key areas:

1. Affordable, zero-emissions buildings
2. Zero-emissions transportation
3. Renewable energy for everyone
4. An empowered community
5. A path to zero for business

3. Purpose of the Implementation Committee

The Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee functions as an advisory committee of Council, and as such, any recommendation will take effect through Council approval processes. To avoid confusion with the original Carbon-Free Colchester Advisory Committee that guided the development of the CEEP, this Committee is referred to as the Carbon-Free Colchester *Implementation* Committee.

The role of the Committee includes:

- Identifying community needs and priorities to inform implementation of the Energy Plan and climate action more generally;
- Assisting municipal staff to develop “micro-plans” to recommend to Council, which will identify short-term Carbon-Free Colchester priorities for the Municipality to focus on during 4- to 5-year periods;
- Participating in staff’s periodic review of the CEEP to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the community and adapts to the changing climate and legislative context;

- Evaluating Council decisions through a climate lens and providing formal recommendations as requested; and
- Advising and assisting staff to develop partnerships in the community to advance the objectives of the Community Energy & Emissions Plan.

4. Membership

Invitations to participate on the Implementation Committee are directed to members of the public that are well-connected within the County and who can provide insight into the needs of a particular community group, for example, business-owners, farmers, students, or an equity-deserving group such as Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour (BIPOC), people with disabilities, seniors, or members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Members may or may not be linked to climate change mitigation or adaptation or community energy planning but should have some basic understanding of climate change, climate change impacts, and community-based climate change solutions.

The Committee will comprise of:

- 2 Councillors (voting)
- A minimum of 4 community representatives (voting)
- 2 staff members (non-voting)

5. Level of Commitment

Each Committee member and/or their organization agrees to commit staff or volunteer time, expertise, and effort to the implementation of Carbon-Free Colchester. Members are expected to attend regular meetings, and there will be a greater time commitment required from members during development of the micro-plans.

The membership term for the Committee will be two years for appointed members of Council and four years for citizen members. A member may leave the Committee at any time by notifying the Nominating Committee. The change will become official upon confirmation of receipt of the request.

Each member or their organization commit to the following:

- a) Each member will respond to meeting requests at their earliest convenience
- b) Each member and/or their organization agrees in principle to the Terms of Reference
- c) Each organization's representative is sufficiently senior to represent its views (as applicable)
- d) Each representative will report on the Committee's activities to its organization (as applicable)
- e) Each organization will strive to maintain continuity of representation (as applicable)

6. Code of Conduct

Each Committee member is expected to treat their fellow members, as well as staff and other project team members, with respect. This includes giving all members time to speak in turn at meetings, practicing patience with differing opinions or challenging discussions, and respecting the time and efforts of all present. Meetings will take place in person or using Zoom video-conferencing software, depending on the needs of Committee members and any public health restrictions in place at a given time. All Committee members and meeting attendees agree to be as present in the meeting as possible and make space for others' comfort level and experience with online tools, access to technology, and comfort with recording of meetings or portions of meetings.

The Committee consists of a range of community members and leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Municipal staff and consultants will do their best to establish a meeting format that will allow for equal participation from all Committee members; however, members must also do their part to share speaking time, allow fellow members time and space to contribute, respect the input and ideas of all members, and not interrupt others. The Committee should be a safe environment where all members feel equally important and able to contribute.

7. Expectations of the Implementation Committee and its Members

Each Committee member is encouraged to share their own expertise, whether based on study, professional experience, or lived experience, and to help foster open and constructive discussion. Each participant should follow a consensus-based approach where members are at liberty to disagree and are encouraged to seek compromise and find a common point of view within the framework of the project's objectives. External experts may be invited to attend Committee meetings and consult with the Committee, as required.

Members are expected to support the Committee's recommendations and/or decisions arrived upon through consensus. In situations where a committee member or their host organization (if applicable) has a concern that cannot be reasonably resolved, that member's name and/or that of their host organization will not be listed in the applicable document.

8. Communication Protocol

Communications between members and Municipality of Colchester staff are to be as transparent as possible, and all Committee members are to be treated equally.

The "Chatham House Rule" applies to all Implementation Committee meetings, working group sessions, teleconferences, email exchanges, and drafts (including reviewer comments). Based on this rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.

Colchester staff will be the sole spokespeople for Carbon-Free Colchester initiatives unless identified opportunities are presented and agreed upon. Otherwise, Implementation Committee members must not engage with any media representatives or outlets (social or conventional) on behalf of the Committee. Conversations, especially disagreements, between Committee members must remain internal and be addressed discretely and respectfully by members.

9. Decision-Making

Wherever possible, recommendations of the Implementation Committee will be decided on through consensus. In the event a recommendation requires a vote of the Committee, eighty percent or more of the voting members must be in favour of a recommendation for it to be accepted as an Implementation Committee consensus.

**Municipality of the County of Colchester
Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee**

Member Letter of Commitment

I, _____ (*first and last name*), commit to assisting to implement the Municipality of Colchester Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) as a member of the Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee. I will do this in my capacity as:

_____ *Position / Title*

_____ *Organization (if applicable)*

By signing below, I acknowledge I have read and understand the Terms of Reference for the Municipality of Colchester Carbon-Free Colchester Implementation Committee.

I agree to follow the Code of Conduct described in the Terms of Reference, and I understand that failure to respect other participants and facilitators may result in my removal from the Committee. I will do my utmost to ensure my fellow Committee members feel heard, respected, and valued.

I acknowledge that these terms are considered binding in terms of participation on the Implementation Committee. Further, I acknowledge that directions and conclusions drawn by the Committee do not represent opinions or directions of Municipality of Colchester Council, municipal staff, or any other municipal departments or bodies.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____