BACKGROUNDER:

Muskoka Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan
March 4, 2024

What is the CEERP, why was it created, and what was the District's role?

- Muskoka's Community Emissions and Energy Reduction Plan (CEERP) is a roadmap for achieving critically important GHG reduction goals. It is a bold and ambitious plan created by the community for the community, acknowledging that achieving the goals will require collective and inspired action from everyone.

- *Taking Action Together* is a key objective in the District's new Strategic Plan, with a focus on taking steps to mitigate climate change in our communities. This action area addresses commitments that District Council and Area Municipal Councils made in December 2020 to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 50% by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

- The District convened a task force in 2023, bringing community members and partners from across Muskoka to consider the best path to meet Muskoka's GHG reduction goals and help shape the CEERP. After establishing an inventory of current emission levels, task force members continued to work together throughout 2023 as the plan was developed. Representatives from the District and Area Municipalities provided input as members of the task force and helped facilitate the process of creating the plan.

- The plan is ready to be shared with the community so that work can start. The consultants will introduce the final plan to the Community and Planning Services Committee on March 21, 2024.

What does the plan tell us? What are some of the key parts of the plan?

The plan outlines strategic actions across three key areas emphasizing the critical role of community engagement and cross-sector collaboration for successful implementation:

- **Transportation:** Accounting for 74% of Muskoka's GHG emissions, the plan focuses on promoting electric/low-carbon vehicles, public transit, and active transportation to decrease reliance on fossil fuels.
- **Buildings:** Targeting 20% of the region's emissions, initiatives include energy-efficient retrofit programs and integrating renewable energy sources to reduce the carbon footprint of Muskoka's infrastructure.
- **Community Systems:** Addressing the remainder of emissions through waste reduction, sustainable tourism, education, and community design to foster a resilient and environmentally friendly community.

How will Muskoka make this happen? What do we need to be successful?

- The CEERP calls for urgent, collaborative action from all community members, including residents, businesses, and government, to achieve these ambitious targets and ensure a sustainable future for Muskoka.

- Substantial financial investment is required to achieve its objectives, with costs distributed across various sectors over several years.

- Key factors that will support successful implementation of the CEERP:

    1. **Community-wide Collaboration:** Success hinges on the active participation of all sectors – government, businesses, community groups, and residents – to implement the outlined actions and contribute to a sustainable future.
    2. **Education and Outreach:** A significant portion of the CEERP's implementation strategy relies on raising awareness and educating the community about sustainable practices and the importance of reducing energy consumption.
    3. **Innovative Financing:** Detailed assessments and strategic investments are necessary to support various initiatives proposed across different sectors.
    4. **Monitoring and Adaptation:** Continuous evaluation and adaptation of the plan will be critical to incorporate emerging technologies and deepen emissions reductions, ensuring Muskoka's progress towards its net-zero target.

What is the District's part? What steps will we take to implement the CEERP?

- *Walking the Talk:* is another key objective in Council's new Strategic Plan, with an action area focused on reducing the GHG emissions generated from how we deliver municipal programs and services and build our infrastructure. This work involves implementing CEERP actions to reduce corporate GHG emissions and increasing investments through reserve funds to accelerate efforts.

- The initial financial implications of implementing CEERP actions to reduce the District's corporate emissions will be forecasted in late spring/early summer 2024 prior to its forthcoming 2025/2026 Budget, which will help the Council prioritize projects and accelerate efforts through the newly established District Climate Change Reserve Fund.

- Senior staff from District teams including Facilities, Finance, Engineering & Public Works, Planning, and Watershed Programs have started the forecasting work, and this will align with the 2025/2026 District of Muskoka Budget process.