



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Exploring Opportunities for Local Green Sector Job Training and Employment for Toronto Youth

Date:	June 30, 2010
To:	City Council
From:	Chief Corporate Officer General Manager, Toronto Employment and Social Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Responding to the recommendation made by the Executive Committee at the meeting on June 14, 2010, this report describes the actions being taken as well as the next steps required to explore the development of a training and employment program and a strategy to engage relevant local manufacturers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Corporate Officer and the General Manager of Toronto Employment and Social Services recommend that:

The General Managers of Toronto Employment and Social Services and Economic Development and the Chief Corporate Officer develop a training and employment pilot program, and an engagement program for local solar manufacturers, substantially as outlined in this report, and report back on how the lessons learned from this pilot will inform future initiatives and approaches in this area.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The Executive Committee requested the Chief Corporate Officer and the General Manager of Toronto Employment and Social Services, in consultation with Toronto

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Hydro and the Central Ontario Building Trades, to report directly to Council on July 6, 2010, on the development of:

- a. A training and employment program related to the Solar Photovoltaic Program that would provide opportunities for local green sector job training and employment for Toronto youth; and
- b. A strategy to engage local manufacturers of products required for the program.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the June 14, 2010 meeting of the Executive Committee, approval was given to the creation of a pilot program between the City and Toronto Hydro Electric Services Ltd. for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on City-owned buildings. As described in full in the report, *Solar Photovoltaic Program for City Facilities*, this pilot program will result in the installation of approximately two Megawatts (MW) of generation capacity, which would in turn generate approximately two million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity annually. This is roughly equivalent to the electricity consumption of 200 households. The resultant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions will be approximately 400 tonnes per year.

The pilot program will run for 18 months. The City and Toronto Hydro will jointly develop solar PV installations on rooftops that are greater than 20,000 square feet in area, totalling up to 400,000 square feet. The City and Toronto Hydro will conduct assessments of building roofs to identify those with the best solar energy potential.

Related to this pilot program, it was recommended that opportunities be explored to develop a training and employment program and a strategy to engage relevant local manufacturers.

COMMENTS

The City, as detailed in the *Solar Photovoltaic Program for City Facilities* report noted above, has a long history of leadership in the field of renewable energy. Over recent years, the City has also demonstrated a growing leadership role with regard to employment planning, management and delivery. Increasingly, as part of this work, the City is developing customized employment plans rooted in the unique strengths and needs of different communities, different employers and different population groups.

The pilot program provides an obvious opportunity to bring together these two critical areas of City leadership. The Green Economic Sector Development Strategy supports strategic initiatives that promote the ability of existing firms in all sectors to invest in technologies and processes as well as the economic growth and success of local environmental companies. As articulated in *People, Planet & Profit: Catalyzing Economic Growth & Environmental Quality in the City of Toronto*, the intent is to stimulate green market demand, enhance and leverage partnerships with existing

networks, capitalize on the City's advantage in renewable energy technology and expand the green sector workforce.

This initiative will directly support the Green Economic Sector Development Strategy, primarily some of the key ideas for developing workforce skills and requirements.

Specifically, the pilot program will address the following areas:

- Develop training programs to improve contractor's abilities to successfully install environmental products in homes and businesses; and
- Develop training programs in conjunction with the trade associations and unions to establish expertise with respect to installing and testing environmental systems.

The Power to Live Green: Toronto's Sustainable Energy Strategy builds upon the ideas in the Green Economic Sector Development Strategy with recommendations on fostering the green economy and green jobs. The Power to Live Green recommends that the City:

- Work with appropriate stakeholders to develop a program that will provide job placement support to the community for skilled tradespeople positions in the areas of retrofitting buildings and generating renewable energy;
- Work with local community colleges in the design, development and marketing of training programs that will generate people with the skills necessary to assist property owners in complying with emerging energy efficiency and renewable energy by-laws and regulations; and
- Establish the business processes necessary for internal coordination within the City of Toronto to more proactively evaluate, pilot and implement new and emerging energy conservation and renewable energy technologies.

In a complementary fashion, City strategies set out in the *Agenda for Prosperity* and *Starting in the Right Place* identify the compelling reasons for more systematically and concertedly promoting and integrating economic strategies concentrating on competitiveness with workforce and employment strategies that focus on inclusion and opportunity. Achieving this goal contributes to sustaining Toronto's competitiveness and to strengthening the city's workforce. As demonstrated in Regent Park, Lawrence Heights and elsewhere, capitalizing on skill building and employment opportunities that result from large-scale city projects can ensure that youth and other un/underemployed City residents can access these opportunities.

As the green economy matures and expands, there will be increased demand for skilled workers to support and sustain this growth. Carefully aligned workforce development and economic development strategies are critical to achieving sustained growth in this and other areas. Such coordination can help increase employer access to a skilled workforce and to future qualified candidates. Of equal importance, in the context of ongoing deindustrialization and the potential for a jobless recovery from the economic downturn, these strategies are vital to retain existing employment.

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While immediate opportunities for residents and employers must be identified and capitalized on, the initiative also holds the promise of leveraging future and more substantial opportunities as similar public, private and community projects emerge. For this reason, the proposed employment and training initiative is best understood as a learning opportunity -- or a pilot within a pilot -- so as to better understand the long term potential for employment, training and skills upgrading in this area. Pilots provide ways to innovate and experiment in relatively low risk ways and, at the same time, to accumulate evidence which can be used to adapt processes and practices to ensure continuous improvement. An employment and training pilot for the Solar Photovoltaic Program will provide insight and lessons and highlight successful models and approaches.

Current and Future Actions

The process of developing an employment and training pilot for the Solar Photovoltaic Program is necessary at an early stage. Reflecting this, the focus of current activity is on scoping out and taking advantage of prospective employment opportunities resulting from the Solar Photovoltaic Program pilot, as well as assessing the types of skills required to perform the jobs created or needed to implement this program.

To this end, initial discussions have occurred among key staff from Toronto Employment and Social Services, Economic Development and Culture, and the Toronto Renewable Energy Office. Discussions are also taking place between City staff and Toronto Hydro and Central Ontario Building Trades.

Below we describe the next steps required for each individual recommendation.

Developing a Training and Employment Program

Best practice research and experience highlight a number of discrete steps in the development of an employment strategy. In the context of this initiative, next steps will seek to identify: a clear understanding of what the project can realistically achieve in terms of job types, skill requirements, skill building and generating new employment opportunities; key partners and delineate the specific roles of contractors, unions, and service delivery organizations; specific employers, skill needs and future trends; the current workforce supply in these areas, any reskilling and training requirements that result and the process to ensure that residents can access these opportunities; and the existing capacity within the service delivery infrastructure within these areas and, as a result, either enhance the coordination of this capacity or create new capacity. Following implementation, the strategy will be monitored to identify emerging lessons, best practices and areas to be strengthened.

Engaging Local Manufacturers

Economic Development and Culture have recently appointed a Green Sector Development Officer who will be broadly responsible for the development and growth of the green sector in the city. A critical part of this process will be developing a greater understanding of existing green businesses and their capacities. The Green Sector Development Officer will be engaging with local companies to develop a Green Business Directory for Toronto.

As part of this process the potential of these existing companies to support this pilot program will be explored to determine from local manufacturers to find out what opportunities there may be for procurement and/or training exist. This engagement will determine, among other things: the number of green technology companies in Toronto/GTA with appropriate technologies; ways and opportunities to engage these local manufacturers; and ways to support their training and hiring requirements.

CONCLUSION

This pilot program provides a means of promoting green jobs and at the same time providing employment, training and skills upgrading opportunities for youth and other un/underemployed City residents in this critical area.

As a result staff from Toronto Hydro, Central Ontario Building Trades, Toronto Renewable Energy Office, Economic Development and Culture, and Toronto Employment and Social Services will continue to work closely to further explore this exciting opportunity.

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