



January 31, 2007

Supporting the CHBA's Built Green program and energy efficient building

In 2005, Saanich joined 29 other BC municipalities in the pilot program funded by the federal and provincial governments called Community Action on Energy Efficiency (CAEE). The purpose of this program is to explore means for municipalities to improve the energy efficiency of buildings to meet the Province's targets set out in the *Energy Efficient Buildings: A plan for BC* document.

Because of our involvement in this program, we have focused our efforts on the GHG emissions associated with buildings, and more specifically with the **new** residential housing sector. The Province's target reduction for this sector is to achieve an EnerGuide for Houses rating of 80 for all new, detached single-family and row houses by 2010.

On a parallel track, the CHBA has introduced its Built Green program which qualifies builders and certifies new residential structures as meeting one of three levels of efficiency and environmental integrity (Bronze, Silver or Gold).

Saanich wishes to assist and complement the efforts of the CHBA in making the Built Green program more popular and widespread.

As the Local Government Act gives very limited authority to the municipality to *regulate* energy efficiency, the Planning Department has pursued using *incentives* to increase the number of energy efficient new homes. We have developed a list of the incentives that may be of sufficient interest to encourage Built Green and other similar energy efficient buildings. These include:

1. Rebates on building permit fees.
2. Front of the line service for "green" building permits.
3. Design assistance for energy efficiency.
4. Assistance with filling out rebate applications and other government grants/programs (helping with the red tape).
5. Free energuide assessments and testing (via BC Hydro).
6. Marketing assistance/support when selling homes.
7. Building labelling and awards program.

Starting in March, 2007, we would like to roll out the first of these incentive programs as a pilot. We have chosen to go with the "Built Green" accreditation program for single family homes as it has been endorsed by the CHBA, there are locally offered courses for builders to become accredited Built Green builders, and energy efficiency is a key component of the label. To achieve Built Green Gold status, a new home must achieve an Energuide rating of 77.

Similar to the Calgary and Strathcona County, Alberta rebate program for Built Green, the Saanich incentive program might rebate up to 30% of the building permit fee to any builder who achieves Built Green status (10% for Bronze; 20% for Silver; and 30% for Gold). If a home that achieves an Energuide rating of 80 or higher or has R-2000 certification (with no Built Green) they might also qualify for the 30% rebate.

BC Hydro has agreed to cover the costs of the Energuide design assessment and testing (value approx. \$400) and to provide a consultant to do the individual consultations with builders (Incentive 5). They will also help underwrite the builders promotional advertising (Incentive 6).

If this program is to be effective, we will be pursuing the following tasks:

Research in order to develop:

- A better understanding of what barriers/obstacles are faced by builders that prevent them from building green or energy efficient homes
- A better understanding of what benefits there are to building green that would enable us to further define incentive programs and marketing strategies.
- Assessing future potential of our incentive programs to reach not only the new homes market, but also the renovation and multi-family sectors.
- Assessment of whether our programs will meet the targets set by the Province and the CRD's Community Energy Plan by 2010 and diagnosis of what additional resources would be needed to meet those targets if necessary.

Consulting assistance to provide:

- Expertise and assistance to builders to design energy efficient houses
- Assistance to builders with seeking financial rebates through utilities and government rebate programs.

Consulting assistance to develop:

- A professional marketing and awards program, beyond our Saanich website, to recognize builders within our community who are building green homes.

The above work will take more staff time and money therefore Saanich plans to apply for Provincial and Federal climate change funding to assist.

In the meantime, there is a strong desire to immediately move forward on supporting CHBA's Built Green program.