



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: June 25, 2021
Submitted by: Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division
Subject: CleanBC Better Homes Municipal Support Program

Purpose

To provide Council with additional information regarding a potential municipal top-up and heat pump group purchase rebate program under the CleanBC Better Homes program.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT \$25,400 be approved to fund a municipal top-up rebate and heat pump group purchase rebate program under the CleanBC Better Homes Program as recommended in the report dated June 25, 2021 from the Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division regarding CleanBC Better Homes Municipal Support Program;

AND THAT the budget of \$25,400 be forwarded to the Finance Committee to identify a funding source;

AND THAT staff be directed to implement and coordinate promotion of Option 1 for a CleanBC Better Homes municipal top-up rebate and heat pump group purchase rebate program as outlined in Attachment 5 of the report dated June 25, 2021 from the Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division regarding CleanBC Better Homes Municipal Support Program;

AND THAT an annual transfer of \$50,000 from general revenue to the Carbon Offset Reserve be re-instated starting in 2022.

Background

Participating in a CleanBC municipal top-up and heat pump group purchase rebate program was initiated and supported by the Climate Action Committee earlier in 2021. More information on previous CleanBC related Climate Action Committee resolutions can be found in **Attachments 1, 2, and 3**. At the June 22, 2021 Regular Council meeting, Council passed the following motion in response to a report from Councillor Meghan Lahti and Councillor Amy Lubik regarding municipal support for CleanBC Better Homes:

THAT this item be referred to staff for a report back.

Discussion

CleanBC Better Homes Program

The [CleanBC Better Homes program](#)¹ is an integrated offer of incentives, information, and support to assist homeowners in reducing home energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through retrofits and upgrades. The program is funded by the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada under the Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, and rebates are administered by BC Hydro and FortisBC. A list of current CleanBC Better Homes rebates can be found in **Attachment 4**.

Local Government Initiatives to Support CleanBC Better Homes

The CleanBC Better Homes program allows local governments to offer tailored municipal top-up rebates on several existing CleanBC Better Homes rebates (outlined in **Attachment 5**) that support local priorities such as the [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP)² goals and targets. Municipalities offering top-ups provide a budget to the CleanBC Better Homes administration team and support the program by promoting the municipal and provincial rebate offers locally. The CleanBC program sets the value per each rebate and the number of top-up rebates available is determined based on the total budget provided by the municipality. There is no additional application process for homeowners to access municipal top-ups as eligibility is automatically assessed when a CleanBC rebate application is submitted.

The [Heat Pump Group Purchase Rebate](#)³ (GPR) is an additional offer that rewards groups (maximum 30 homes) of homeowners working together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by switching from fossil fuel-based heating systems to an air source heat pump. Participants are encouraged to spread the word about the GPR, as the larger each group becomes, the larger the rebate per home will be. Like the municipal top-up, the CleanBC administration team handles administration of the GPR, and promotion is coordinated locally through existing channels and networks to grow interest and increase the rebate amount per home.

Staff recommend Option 1 outlined in **Attachment 5** as this represents meaningful GHG reductions balanced with the number of homes that are eligible and expected to be at or nearing time of home heating and cooling system replacement. If successful, staff may recommend increasing the number of top-up rebates in future years. It is important to note that while the number of municipal top-up rebates would be limited, the provincially funded CleanBC rebates remain available to all eligible Port Moody households.

¹ CleanBC Better Homes: <https://betterhomesbc.ca/>

² Port Moody Climate Action Plan: <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/services/edocs.ashx?docnumber=511721>

³ CleanBC GPR: <https://betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/gpr/>

Program Value

Staff believe that participation in the CleanBC Better Homes municipal top-up (top-up) and group heat pump purchase rebate program (GPR) provide great value for the investment.

Program Administration and Staff Capacity

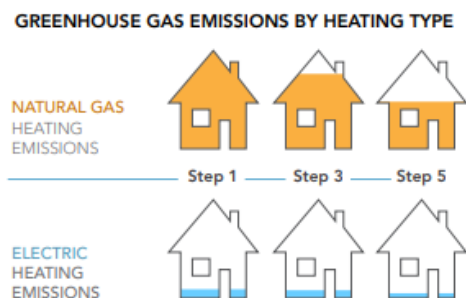
Since program administration is handled by the CleanBC team, there is minimal staff time required to offer the proposed programs as compared to a similar program if administered solely by the City. Currently, the City does not have the capacity to develop and operate a City-run rebate program. By participating in CleanBC programming, limited staff involvement is expected to provide the program. Staff time is estimated at 2-5 hours per week after an initial 1-day program set up.

Communications and Engagement

Building off the existing CleanBC programming allows the City to use the promotional messaging and materials created by CleanBC. This reduces the staff time required as only minor adjustments to existing materials would be required to add local context and additional information as opposed to creating brand new messaging and materials. The CleanBC administration team also offers free community webinars to support the programs and share information on local climate action programming, further reducing barriers to information access and providing an opportunity to interact with the community on climate action.

Emissions Reduction Opportunity

Home heating makes up a significant amount of home energy use⁴ and in BC can be a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions depending on the mechanical system's fuel source and efficiency, as shown in the figure below. In most cases, installing high-efficiency electric heating and cooling equipment such as heat pumps will be the quickest, most economical, and most permanent way to achieve low GHG buildings. Additionally, heat pumps can provide health and resiliency benefits such as cooling, achieving multiple climate action goals. Other than the City of Vancouver, municipalities in BC are largely limited to incentives and rebates to encourage homeowners to reduce GHG emissions in homes at the point of renovation.



(source: Metro Vancouver Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap⁵)

⁴ Natural Resources Canada Heating Equipment for Residential Use: [Heating equipment for residential use \(nrcan.gc.ca\)](https://nrcan.gc.ca/heating-equipment-for-residential-use)

⁵ Metro Vancouver Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap: [Climate 2050 Roadmap | Buildings: A Pathway to Zero Emissions and Resilient Buildings \(metrovanclimate.org\)](https://metrovanclimate.org/buildings-roadmap)

Based on modelling done for the Climate Action Plan, meeting the Plan's targets would require that approximately 160 homes are renovated per year (between the years of 2021-2030) and replaced with zero emissions energy systems. The proposed top-up and GPR would offer at least 24 homes an additional financial benefit for upgrading their home's heating system above existing rebates, equating to 15% of the desired yearly turnover from this sector.

The 24 rebates recommended reflects an estimated number of homes anticipated to be at or nearing time of replacement or considering an upgrade, and those eligible for participation balanced with the financial availability of the City to support such a program. Those who may be interested but are not able to access the top-up in the event of a fully subscribed program, can still benefit from the GPR, the CleanBC Better Homes rebate, and any other stackable incentives (up to \$500 from GPR, up to \$3,000 from CleanBC better homes, up to \$5,600 from [Canada Greener Homes Grant](#)⁶). CleanBC Better Homes is anticipated to be a multi-year program, where if the initial year of a top-up proves successful, the City may consider offering a top-up in future years.

Municipal top-ups on CleanBC have been very successful in many BC communities, exemplified through [fully subscribed top-up programs](#)⁷. Municipal top-ups, especially when stacked with other incentives available, can add meaningful financial benefit to homeowners. In addition, the municipal top-up displays leadership by the municipality in supporting residents to reduce climate impacts and highlights a priority climate action area that residents can take on.

Synergies with Other Climate Action Programming

Through the Phase One Climate Action Implementation Strategy, Council approved development of a Zero Emissions, Climate Resilient Buildings Plan (Building Plan). This work is underway and would benefit from the proposed top-up and GPR to support the messaging and future programming anticipated in this plan. When consulting on actions as a part of this plan's development, there is an opportunity to align information and communication strategies associated with CleanBC to streamline resources and staff time. This information would not only reach those who are interested in the CleanBC programming right now, but also provide valuable information to support climate-smart decision making in the future. This coordinated approach would demonstrate that the City is doing its part to support residents in meeting climate goals, in advance of any possible future local or provincial requirements.

Through this community outreach staff would have an opportunity to interact with residents to inform the Plan's actions and recommendations, address concerns and barriers, and provide residents with reliable information for current and future home energy and emissions decisions. This would also include informing residents of other programs to support home emissions reductions in conjunction with and separate to CleanBC. This supports the goals and targets in the Climate Action Plan and is an efficient use of existing staff time.

⁶ Canada Greener Homes Grant: [Canada Greener Homes Grant \(nrcan.gc.ca\)](https://nrcan.gc.ca)

⁷ CleanBC Municipal Offers list: [Municipal Top-ups on The Home Renovation Rebate - Better Homes BC](#)

Program Preparation Timeline

The CleanBC administration team advises municipalities to begin a top-up and any other aligned supporting programs such as the GPR, either October 1st or June 1st of each year. These dates streamline municipal onboarding to the program and align with the timing of any changes to the CleanBC programming. Given that June 1, 2021 has already passed, staff recommend that, if endorsed, the City begin CleanBC programming October 1, 2021. This date also aligns with the time of year that most home heating and cooling systems are replaced. Before CleanBC municipal programming can be offered, there are several tasks that need to be completed including:

- confirming participation, municipal funding and administration details with CleanBC;
- providing the utilities (BC Hydro and FortisBC) a minimum of 30 days' notice of program start;
- ensuring staff are briefed and prepared to answer questions from interested residents;
- developing a communications and engagement strategy, including scheduling community webinars; and
- deploying the communication and engagement strategy in a timely manner to increase awareness and uptake prior to and during the top-up and GRP program dates.

Current timing would provide staff approximately three months to complete the steps above before rolling out the recommended top-up and GRP starting October 1, 2021. This is an accelerated timeline compared to typical schedules associated with initiating a new community program, however, if endorsed, staff would prioritize completion of the above steps.

Other Options

THAT the report dated June 25, 2021 from the Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division regarding CleanBC Better Homes Municipal Support Program be received for information.

Financial Implications

Supporting Option 1 for a top-up and GPR is expected to incur a cost of up to \$25,400 as outlined in the table below.

Port Moody Funding	Funding Item
\$2,000	Estimated Group Purchase Rebate (GPR) Communications Support Budget
\$20,400	Top-Up Rebate Budget
\$3,000	Estimated Top-Up Communications Support Budget
\$25,400	Total Estimated Budget Required

Recommended Funding Strategy

The Carbon Offset Reserve contains funds received from the [Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program](#) (CARIP) (approximately \$50,000) annually and matching funds contributed by the City. The Carbon Offset Reserve funds are earmarked for community climate action initiatives such as a climate-focused rebate.

The province recently announced the end of CARIP and in 2020, due to COVID-19 financial constraints, the City paused matching CARIP contributions to the Reserve, leaving the Carbon Offset Reserve unfunded. Staff positions currently funded by the Carbon Offset Reserve are proposed to be incorporated into the operating budget in a phased approach, but there is still a need to fund climate action projects and initiatives that support the Climate Action Plan and Climate Emergency Declaration.

Now that the province is entering Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan, staff recommend re-instating the CARIP matching funds in the amount of \$50,000 annually from general revenue beginning in 2022. This would allow the City to invest in impactful climate action projects such as the top-up and GPR, maintain current sustainability programming, and broaden the City's climate action efforts as expressed in the Council Strategic Plan. Re-instating the \$50,000 annually is equivalent to approximately a 0.1% tax impact. The recommended amount may be revisited in future years depending on climate action project needs. Staff will continue to apply for external funding opportunities to offset costs for these projects where possible.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Pending Council endorsement, staff would develop and carry out appropriate communication strategies to support and increase uptake of the municipal top-up and GPR.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The development of a CleanBC Better Homes municipal top-up rebate and participation in the GPR program aligns with the following 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan Objectives:

- broaden the City's sustainability programs; and
- provide leadership in climate change by thinking globally and acting locally.

Attachment(s)

1. CleanBC Municipal Support Climate Action Committee Background.
2. CleanBC Rebates, Community Energy Coach Presentation.
3. Draft CleanBC Port Moody Municipal Top-Up Rebate Options Staff Presentation.
4. Better Homes BC, Home Rebates.
5. Memo, Community Development Department, Policy Planning Division, Dated April 13, 2021.

Report Authors

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CleanBC Better Homes Municipal Support Program.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attachment 1 - CleanBC Municipal Support Climate Action Committee Background.pdf- Attachment 2 - CleanBC Rebates, Community Energy Coach Presentation.pdf- Attachment 3 - Draft CleanBC Port Moody Municipal Top-Up Rebate Options Staff Presentation.pdf- Attachment 4 - Better Homes BC, Home Rebates.pdf- Attachment 5 - Memo, Community Development Department, Policy Planning Division, dated April 13, 2021.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jul 7, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Mary De Paoli, Manager of Policy Planning - Jul 6, 2021 - 11:06 AM

Robyn MacLeod for Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development - Jul 6, 2021 - 1:47 PM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Jul 6, 2021 - 3:04 PM

Natasha Vander Wal for Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Jul 6, 2021 - 3:30 PM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Jul 7, 2021 - 11:32 AM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Jul 7, 2021 - 2:11 PM