



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: February 10, 2023
Submitted by: Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division
Subject: CleanBC Municipal Rebate Top Up Options

Purpose

To outline options for providing a municipal top-up on rebates under the CleanBC Better Homes program.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the recommended CleanBC municipal top-ups be endorsed as recommended in the report dated February 10, 2023 from the Community Development Department – Policy Planning Division regarding CleanBC Municipal Rebate Top Up Options.

Background

At the July 13, 2021 Regular Council Meeting, Council considered options for providing a municipal top-up on CleanBC Better Homes rebates, however, no budget for rebates was allocated at that time. At the same meeting, Council passed the following resolution:

RC21/361c

THAT a budget of \$2,000 be approved to promote a CleanBC Better Homes heat pump group purchase rebate program.

At the December 6, 2022 Finance Committee meeting, funding requests to support the phase two climate actions for 2023 were approved and ratified by Council, including \$25,000 to support implementation of municipal top-ups on CleanBC Better Homes rebates.

Discussion

Home heating makes up a significant amount of home energy use¹ and in BC can be a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions depending on the mechanical system's fuel source, 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

¹ Natural Resources Canada Heating Equipment for Residential Use: <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy-efficiency/products/heating-equipment-for-residential-use/13740>

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.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY HEATING TYPE



(Source: Metro Vancouver Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap²)

CleanBC Better Homes Program

The [CleanBC Better Homes program](#)³ is an integrated offer of incentives, information, and support to assist homeowners in reducing home energy use and 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 utilities. A list of current CleanBC Better Homes rebates can be found on the CleanBC webpage linked above.

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 rebates for homes that support local priorities such as the [Climate Action Plan \(CAP\)](#)⁴ and [Climate Ready Homes and Buildings Plan](#)⁵ goals and targets. Municipalities offering top-ups provide a budget to the CleanBC Better Homes administration team and support the program by promoting rebate offers locally. The municipality sets the value per each rebate and the CleanBC team determines the number of top-up rebates available 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.

Program Value

Participation in the CleanBC Better Homes municipal top-up (top-up) provides great value for the investment. Since program administration is handled by the CleanBC team, there is minimal staff time required 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 the top-up program, limited staff involvement is required, estimated at 3-5 hours per month, after an initial 1-day program set up.

² Metro Vancouver Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap: http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality/climate-action/climate2050/Climate2050Docs/Climate2050BuildingsRoadmap_Final_October2021.pdf

³ CleanBC Better Homes: <https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/>

⁴ Port Moody Climate Action Plan: <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/city-hall/climate-action-plan.aspx>

⁵ Port Moody Climate Ready Homes and Buildings Plan: <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/services/edocs.ashx?docnumber=590883>

The recommendations in this report ensure broader alignment across the Tri-Cities as the City of Coquitlam has recently implemented a top-up program. Since early 2022, the cities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, and Port Coquitlam have been collaborating on [promotion of CleanBC programs](#)⁶ such as:

- issuing Group Purchase Rebate (GPR) codes so that Tri-Cities residents can access an additional rebate for heat pumps;
- coordinated CleanBC promotional messaging on websites, print resources, and social media ads; and
- hosting two “Introduction to Heat Pump” webinars for Tri-Cities residents;

The [Heat Pump Group Purchase Rebate](#)⁷ (GPR) is an additional offer that rewards groups of homeowners (maximum 30 homes per GPR code) that are reducing GHG 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 code during the code active period, as the larger each group becomes (up to a maximum of 30 homes), the larger the rebate per home will be. Multiple GPR codes can be initiated if there are more than 30 homes interested. Like the municipal top-up, the CleanBC team handles administration of the GPR, and promotion is coordinated locally to grow interest and increase the rebate amount per home. The Tri-Cities have been offering a GPR code continuously since July 2022.

Tri-Cities collaboration will continue into 2023 and the introduction of a top-up rebate in Coquitlam and Port Moody presents an opportunity to further collaborate on promotion. The recommendations in this report are aligned with the top-ups being offered in Coquitlam.

Recommendations for Port Moody Municipal Top-Ups

Staff recommend focusing municipal top-ups on fuel switching rebates to maximize GHG reductions that align with the City’s goals. Port Moody’s Climate Action Plan and Climate Ready Homes and Buildings Plan include a goal that all new and replacement heating and hot water systems are zero emissions by 2030. Between July 2022 and January 2023, 26 Port Moody residents have registered for the Tri-Cities GPR to use towards the installation of a heat pump.

Through the 2023 budget process, Council approved \$25,000 to support implementation of a CleanBC municipal rebate top-up. Staff recommend focusing top-up funds on three streams of rebates:

- heat pump municipal top-up valued at \$350
- electric service upgrade municipal top-up valued at \$500
- heat pump water heater municipal top-up valued at \$350

It is important to note that while the number of Port Moody municipal top-up rebates would be limited, the provincially funded CleanBC rebates and Tri-Cities GPR remain available to all eligible Port Moody households. Before CleanBC municipal programming can be offered, there are several steps to be completed by staff including:

- confirming participation, municipal funding and administration details with CleanBC;

⁶ Port Moody Rebates and Incentives: <https://www.portmoody.ca/en/home-and-property/rebates-and-incentives.aspx>

⁷ Group Purchase Heat Pump Rebate: <https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/rebates/gpr/>

- providing a minimum of 30 days' notice of program start to the Province;
- ensuring staff are briefed and prepared to answer questions from interested residents;
- developing a communications and engagement strategy and deploying the strategy in a timely manner to increase awareness and uptake prior to and during the top-up and GPR program dates.

If Council supports the recommended rebate top-ups, the program implementation is anticipated to begin in April 2023 and end when funds are depleted, which is estimated to be March 2024.

Other Option(s)

THAT Council authorize an alternative top-up rebate value for heat pumps and/or an alternative combination of top-ups on CleanBC rebates.

Financial Implications

Funding to support a municipal top-up was approved in the amount of \$25,000 through the 2023 budget process. A budget of \$2,000 was approved in 2021 for the promotion of CleanBC programs, including the GPR codes. To date, approximately \$100 has been spent on promotions of webinars, GPR codes, and general CleanBC programs locally. Pending Council endorsement, staff will provide the rebate budget of \$25,000 to the Provincial CleanBC staff to administer top-up funds. The remaining \$1,900 communication budget will be utilized in house for the promotion of the top-ups, along with continuation of existing promotion of the GPR code and other CleanBC programs.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Pending Council endorsement, Port Moody municipal top-ups will be added to the [CleanBC top-up webpage](#)⁸. Staff will develop and carry out appropriate communication strategies to support and increase uptake of the top-up and continuation of the GPR, coordinated with the Tri-Cities. These strategies will leverage and build off the communication materials developed by and available through the CleanBC program. 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 new messaging and materials.

The CleanBC administration team offers free community webinars to support 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. Staff will develop a schedule of webinar offerings to support municipal top-up outreach.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The implementation of a CleanBC Better Homes municipal top-up rebate and continued participation and promotion of the GPR and other CleanBC programs align with the following 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan Objectives:

- broaden the City's sustainability programs; and

⁸ CleanBC Municipal Top-Ups: [https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/municipal-offers/#::~:~:text=Heater%20Top%20Dup-Participants%20that%20switch%20from%20a%20fossil%20fuel%20\(oil%2C%20natural%20gas,Home%20Energy%20Improvement%20Bonus%20rebate.](https://www.betterhomesbc.ca/municipal-offers/#::~:~:text=Heater%20Top%20Dup-Participants%20that%20switch%20from%20a%20fossil%20fuel%20(oil%2C%20natural%20gas,Home%20Energy%20Improvement%20Bonus%20rebate.)

- provide leadership in climate change by thinking globally and acting locally.

Attachment(s): none

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CleanBC Municipal Rebate Top Up Options.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Feb 17, 2023

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

Mary De Paoli, Manager of Policy Planning - Feb 13, 2023 - 8:34 AM

Kate Zanon, General Manager of Community Development - Feb 13, 2023 - 8:40 AM

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Feb 13, 2023 - 10:20 AM

Natasha Vander Wal, Acting Manager of Communications and Engagement - Feb 13, 2023 - 11:27 AM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Feb 13, 2023 - 11:43 AM

Jeff Moi for Tim Savoie, City Manager - Feb 17, 2023 - 4:20 PM