

Energy consumption in Bonfield

These days one of the headlines in most news agencies is the COP26. The Conference of Parties (COP) is the 26th conference of the United Nations about climate change. At the same time, protests are going on in Glasgow, where the conference is being held. Protesters believe that holding conferences is insufficient and a practical commitment is needed, even though China and the US pledged to improve the climate change plan to reach the target. This inaction can cause irreversible damages. For example, India and China, while making a great deal of effort to mitigate climate change, are unable to stop burning coal to power cities. Infrastructure is not ready yet for a sudden cease of fossil fuel consumption. While this large-scale transition is gradual, still there are immediate actions that can be accomplished on a smaller scale.

Recently, an energy consumption analysis was conducted in Bonfield. According to the findings of this report, the two main energy consumption sources in Bonfield are private car transportation and residential buildings. Of course, it is impossible to quickly switch to public transport. As mentioned earlier, many mitigative actions need infrastructure that does not currently exist. However, there are lots of opportunities. Electric Vehicles (EVs) are not the first choice of northern communities for a variety of technical reasons e.g., the distance between cities, lack of charging stations, and battery performance in cold northern winters. Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) are reasonable alternatives for many of these challenges. Most PHEVs can easily accommodate Bonfield-North Bay travel. One may argue that PHEV uses electricity to run, which in turn, is produced by burning fossil fuel in power plants (Ontario still depends on fossil fuels). It should be emphasized that while this argument is not incorrect, managing emission sources in one source (power plant) is easier and less complicated than doing the same in every vehicle. Also, it is worth mentioning that the Province is moving toward clean energy sources. Incentives from the

Federal Government on PHEVs can also encourage the residents to consider this alternative. The feasibility of installing a charging station in Bonfield is also currently being assessed. Another key energy consumption source according to this report was heating residential buildings. In recent years, many residents have changed oil furnaces to propane. This is a key step to reducing energy consumption. Another feasible improvement in many of our buildings is to upgrade our dwelling with better insulation e.g., windows, doors, ceiling. There are numerous financial incentives to encourage homeowners for this renovation (some have been explained on the municipal website). The first step for this renovation is a free assessment with no obligations attached.

As can be seen, while national and international policy is required for this climate crisis, there are plenty of mitigative affordable measures to reduce energy consumption and curb climate change. Politicians can't control this crisis. Neither, it cannot be done only by the general population. It needs engagement at all levels of governments and people in all countries, and mostly, the countries with a larger share of harmful emissions. The awareness is at a satisfactory level, now it is time to act!