

## **REPORT: ENERGY & WATER MEETING**

# Tantramar 2040: Energy & Water Meeting

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## 1.0 Introduction of Tantrammar 2040

### *Purpose*

Tantrammar 2040 is an initiative to work toward a sustainable future that considers environmental, economic, and social/cultural challenges and opportunities. Partnering communities include the Town of Sackville, and Villages of Dorchester, Memramcook and Port Elgin. This process will build on local initiatives and focus on common topics that can be best addressed as a region.

### *Background*

EOS Eco-Energy co-hosted the *Adaptation & Actions Conference* in March of 2009. The conference was a success with over 100 participants and representation from 15 municipalities in Atlantic Canada. During the final discussion, participants identified the need to develop sustainability plans within municipalities and at the regional level. As a result, EOS submitted proposals to its member municipalities to develop a regional sustainability plan. The Town of Sackville and the Villages of Dorchester, Memramcook, and Port Elgin agreed to work collaboratively on a sustainability plan for the Tantrammar region. EOS is coordinating the Tantrammar 2040 initiative, in partnership with the Tantrammar Planning District Commission.

### *Funding*

EOS Eco-Energy has received funding from the Rural Secretariat and the New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund to coordinate the Tantrammar 2040 initiative.

## 1.1 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was struck to ensure that a quality ICSP representing community interests is produced as required to meet funding deadlines. Members of the Steering Committee report to their respective Councils, associations or organizations, and represent the following entities:

- Town of Sackville
- Village of Memramcook
- Village of Port Elgin
- Village of Dorchester
- Fort Folly First Nation
- Local Service Districts
- Greater Sackville Chamber of Commerce
- Enterprise South East
- Tantrammar Planning District Commission
- Beaubassin Planning Commission
- EOS Eco-Energy

## 1.2 Mission Statement

The Steering Committee crafted a mission statement to reflect the Tantramar 2040 process.

*“Tantramar 2040 will gather the resources and imaginations of its communities to plan and take action on sustainability, ensuring the region’s collective environmental, economic, and socio-cultural wellbeing.”*

## 2.0 Third Round of Meetings

The purpose of the third series of meetings is to provide input in the development of an action plan for the region. There are four meetings that are being held throughout February and March to discuss action planning for the priority topics: food, local business development, energy, social supports, water, bioregional planning, infrastructure, and transportation. Each of the action planning sessions will be held in a different community to accommodate participation from members of each community and the rural areas.

The Tantramar 2040 Steering Committee decided to offset some of the carbon produced as a result of these meetings by purchasing trees to be planted in communities in the Tantramar region. Renaissance Sackville has agreed to donate trees (native species) matching the amount of money raised to offset carbon (ie, if Tantramar 2040 raises \$100 towards the purchase of trees, \$200 worth of trees will be donated to communities).

### 2.1 Marketing

The workshop was open to the public, and invitations were distributed to individuals with knowledge or a keen interest in key areas of sustainability. A poster advertisement and an article in the Sackville Tribune highlighted the opportunity for public involvement in the upcoming meetings. Advertisements were posted on the Tantramar 2040 website, New Brunswick Environmental Network website, Memramcook website, Town of Sackville online events calendar, Dorchester newsletter, and Le Lien newsletter in Memramcook. An email was also sent for distribution to various networks.

### 2.2 Process

In the third round of meetings, coordinators have invited guest speakers to give brief presentations on the topic(s) for the evening. Following the presentation, a series of questions have been developed to help guide the discussion toward creating the action plan for the topic.

## 3.0 Energy and Water Discussion

The *Energy and Water* meeting was held at the St. Ed’s Community Hall in Dorchester, NB. This meeting did not raise any money for carbon offsets.

Eight participants attended the meeting.

### 3.1 Energy Discussion Notes

Théo Losier, an Energy Business Development Officer with the Department of Energy, gave a presentation about the Community Energy Policy in New Brunswick and Steps of a Wind Project.

Facilitators asked the following questions, based on feedback during previous workshops:

1. *What can we do to our reduce dependency on fossil fuels?*
2. *What can we do to engage citizens, businesses and governments in conserving energy and adopting energy efficient behaviours?*
3. *What are the best renewable energy options for us?*

The following notes highlight points from the whole group discussion following Mr. Losier's presentation:

- The group discussed the importance of public perception by companies making presentations to communities. If presentations are not created strategically, many concerns will arise from a lack of proper information on the topic.
- Education is a key component of having people understand the importance and benefits of energy conservation and energy efficiency.
- Incentives are available through Efficiency NB to improve the energy efficiency of commercial and residential buildings.
- There is a need to invest in renewable technologies, both at the community level and individual level. Although the initial investment is costly, the long-term benefits are a reduced reliance on fossil fuels of which there is only a finite amount. Other benefits include energy security (esp. for off-the grid systems).
- The NB Association of Municipalities is interested in collaborative renewable energy projects between many municipalities (15+ MW).
- If a group of communities came forward with a regional proposal for a project (even greater than 15MW), the Department of Energy would look at this proposal favourably.
- Lahave Renewables (Mahone Bay, NS) and Acciona will be giving public presentations in Sackville within the coming weeks.
- Currently, the price under the Community Energy Policy is a standard 10 cents per kWh, regardless of the energy source and cost of production.
- Under the current Community Energy Policy, there have been 8 projects that have submitted requests for expression of interest for projects in excess of 120MW.
- Canadian BioEnergy Centre is a good resource for biomass.

### 3.2 Water Discussion Notes

Sara Smith with the Department of Environment was a resource person for the water discussion.

Facilitators asked the following questions:

1. *How do we ensure long-term safe, reliable and abundant water sources in Tantramar?*
2. *What should we do as citizens to conserve water?*
3. *What are the key issues we need to address in terms of water safety and supply?*
4. *What can our local governments do to help ensure a safe water supply?*

The following notes highlight points from the discussion session:

- Designated wellfields are regulated through the province for more assurance.
- Well water should be tested once per year for microbiology and coliform bacteria.
- The province of New Brunswick has recommendations for testing water, and residents should use this information as a resource.
- The region might want to consider taking a regional stance on shale gas exploration. We need to have a regional dialogue on this topic.
- Citizens and businesses should be encouraged to use rainwater collection and grey water systems.
- The Department of Environment has a pilot project for exploration with Apache in the Elgin area, where Apache is required to give the brand and location of purchase of chemicals used (the Department of Environment would be responsible for researching compounds resulting from combining these chemicals).
- Currently, there is no EIA required for shale gas drilling.
- It is possible to drill underneath a municipality, regardless of their opposition to exploration.
- There is a need to better educate farmers about use of buffer zones on agricultural lands with livestock. Maybe we could have municipal incentive-based initiatives (i.e., trees in buffer zones)
- Water conservation is important.
- Research needs to be done on salt water intrusion projects.
- Lagoons in the region are usually located near water sources— why? For example, the lagoon in Port Elgin is at risk of being destroyed/ washed into the river as a result of extreme coastal events.
- Older homes are polluting our rivers with raw sewage (building codes did not address this issue when these homes were built). Rivers should be monitored, regularly. Some monitoring in Memramcook is being done through the Petitcodiac Watershed Alliance.
- Need to address issues related to household waste and chemical run-off
- Education strategies should be related to health risks/ impacts (possibly develop Community Based Social Marketing Campaigns).

#### 4.0 Next Steps

Discussions from the *action planning* meetings being held throughout February and March will help guide the sustainability plan for the Tantramar region. At the end of the process, there will be a set of actions and potential partners to take collaborative action on the priority topics. Also, we are planning a final workshop - **From Planning to Action** - on Saturday March 19<sup>th</sup> to help address the gap between developing a sustainability plan and implementing it.