

Executive Summary

This research examined the City of Kingston's approach to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program and how the City helps private landowners and developers with the LEED certification process. LEED is a third-party certification program that is considered an internationally accepted benchmark for sustainable building. Arguably, the City of Kingston recognizes that LEED has the potential to help them achieve their vision to "become Canada's most sustainable city". This study therefore tested the validity of that claim by analysing a variety of City documents including the Official Plan, Zoning By-Laws, the Sustainable Kingston Plan, a Community Improvement Plan, the Green Building Guidelines, the Kingston Hydro website and the Utilities Kingston website. These documents were reviewed to determine their applicability to both the LEED program and the principles of LEED.

The policy document analysis highlighted that a range of policies and incentives exist within the City of Kingston that support the *principles* of the LEED program but not the LEED program specifically. A few of the resources also attempt to encourage the public to participate in the LEED program through information. There do not seem to be any real incentives for homeowners or developers to enter into the LEED process. Another of the main gaps in the policy analysis is the lack of sustainability practices in the zoning by-laws. The City of Kingston does however have an opportunity to improve their strive to sustainability by further assisting those interested in participating in the LEED program by amending their zoning by-law to encourage more sustainable practices and by providing LEED specific incentives.

The second focus of the research was interviews. Three City employees from various City departments, and five project managers from the private realm who have achieved LEED certification for buildings within Kingston were interviewed. The interviews were conducted to

investigate how the policies and programs found in the document analysis translate into practice for private landowners and developers. There were three categories identified in the interviews: 1) the City of Kingston's involvement with the LEED program for private projects; 2) how the City could help those interested in the LEED program and; 3) the City's sustainability vision.

Within the first category, the main theme was that the City of Kingston does not help citizens interested in the LEED program but the City may have the potential to assist in the process and the assistance would be beneficial to the public. Themes in the second category were innovative ideas on how the City could help interested citizens, as well as barriers that people face going through the LEED process. One of the main barriers identified was monetary. A relatively simple question was asked of interviewees that formed the third category: "Could the City of Kingston better achieve their vision of becoming Canada's most sustainable City if they offered more assistance and incentives related to the LEED program for private landowners and developers?" The unanimous answer to this question was "yes".

The report concludes by providing recommendations of LEED related policies and programs that the City of Kingston has the potential to offer to the public. Some of the recommendations were generated through the interviews, others were supplied by the researcher of this study. The recommendations section also provided potential challenges of implementing some of the policies and programs.

Overall, further promoting the LEED program by adding weight to existing policies has the potential to help the City to better achieve their vision of becoming Canada's most sustainable city.