



STAFF REPORT **Municipality of Wawa**



Kristy Hansen, EDO

RE: Participation in Research Project with QUEST (Motivating Net-Zero Action in Rural and Remote Communities)

To: Mayor and Council	Report No.: EDO 2024-01
Date: September 26, 2024	Council Meeting Date: Oct. 1, 2024

Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report No. EDO 2024-01 dated September 26, 2024 and approve staff's request to participate in QUEST's research study regarding the opportunities, challenges and motivations unique to rural and remote communities to undertake net-zero action.

Background and Purpose

The Government of Canada is working to motivate communities across Canada to work toward achieving "net-zero" (i.e. ending the amount of greenhouse gases or GHGs produced by human activities). Various funding opportunities to achieve these means exist, but it is difficult to determine which option, if any, makes sense for the Municipality of Wawa given that we are a rural/remote community with different needs than an urban center.

QUEST is a national charity in Canada that supports communities in their transition to net-zero. Staff have met with a representative from QUEST to learn about their current research study where they will be working with 15 remote/rural communities to determine what the barriers are for us to achieving net-zero as well as what might motivate us to want to work toward achieving it. QUEST is interested in working with the Municipality of Wawa to inform their study.

The purpose of QUEST's study, overall, is to inform the development of tailored net-zero strategies and policies, amplify the voices of under-represented and marginalized populations in net-zero decision-making, and provide targeting recommendations to Canadian and Provincial/Territorial policymakers that address the unique interests and challenges of rural and remote communities.

If staff participate in this study, QUEST's work would include a 1-hour (approx.) interview with the CAO, as well as anyone else within the Municipality that staff believe would be beneficial. Wawa would gain the following from participation:

1. A report on what a viable pathway would look like for Wawa to achieve net-zero (thereby assisting us to determine how we should move forward);

2. Wawa's input into QUEST's recommendations to the provincial and federal government for policies around net-zero action to be inclusive and sensible for remote and rural communities; and
3. An in-community workshop by QUEST (the exact format and topic of which would be determined in consultation together after determining what would be most useful for Wawa – for example, a workshop for the community, a presentation for Council, etc.).

Financial Considerations

There is no cost to participate in this research study.

QUEST will provide a report and an in-community workshop free of charge.

QUEST will require approximately 1 hour of the CAO's time for an interview. There is a possibility that QUEST will need to interview other staff after interviewing the CAO, depending on the information gathered.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The staff recommendations presented in this report meet the goals and objects set out in the Wawa Strategic Plan (2023-2027). The reports and work group resulting from this study will provide insight into possible avenues for two Key Priorities identified in the Wawa Strategic Plan (2023-2027), including: infrastructure improvements and long-term financial planning.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Staff recommend that staff participate in QUEST's research project entitled "Motivating Net-Zero Action in Rural and Remote Communities" in order to gain:

1. A report on what a viable pathway would look like for Wawa to achieve net-zero;
2. Wawa's input into QUEST's recommendations to the provincial and federal government for policies around net-zero action to be inclusive and sensible for remote and rural communities; and
3. An in-community workshop by QUEST (the exact format and topic of which would be determined in consultation together after determining what would be most useful for Wawa – for example, a workshop for the community, a presentation for Council, etc.).

Attachments

- a) Quest's one-pager entitled *Motivating Net-Zero Action in Rural and Remote Communities Research Project*

Submitted for Consideration by:

Kristy Hansen, EDO



Motivating Net-Zero Action in Rural and Remote Communities Research Project

Overview

QUEST is looking for rural and remote communities across Canada to participate in a research study. We are looking into the opportunities, challenges, and motivations unique to rural and remote communities to undertake net-zero action. It is imperative that rural and remote voices are heard so the transition is equitable and includes all Canadians. This research is an opportunity for those voices to be heard.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are to explore the motivations driving rural and remote communities to adopt net-zero practices, inform the development of tailored net-zero strategies and policies, amplify the voices of under-represented and marginalized populations in net-zero decision-making, and provide targeted recommendations to Canadian and Provincial/Territorial policymakers that address the unique interests and challenges of rural and remote communities.

Participation

Communities will participate in two research stages:

1. Information gathering (including interviews)
2. An in-community workshop (costs covered by QUEST)

Cost

There is no cost to participate.

About QUEST Canada

QUEST Canada is a registered Canadian charity that supports communities in Canada on their pathway to net-zero. Since 2007, we've been facilitating connections, empowering community champions and advising decision-makers to implement energy use and emissions reduction solutions that best meet community needs and maximize local opportunities. We develop tools and resources, convene stakeholders and rights holders, and advise decision-makers — all with the goal of encouraging, assisting and enabling communities to contribute to Canada's net-zero goals.