



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 25-087**

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Craig Desjardins, Director, Office of Strategy, Innovation & Partnerships

Resource Staff: Tracey Snow, Manager, Rural Economic & Community Development

Date of Meeting: March 4, 2025

Subject: Community Benefit Program Fund Allocation- Kingston Solar LP (Samsung) Renewable Energy Project

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 5. Drive Inclusive Economic Growth

Goal: 3.1 Expand parks and recreation opportunities and participation.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of recommendations made by the Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group for the allocation of funding from the Samsung Community Benefit Program Fund to support rural Kingston. The working group includes two Council members, Councillor Amos and Councillor Oosterhof, and members of the public representing stakeholder groups including agriculture, business, neighbourhood associations and youth. The working group holds regular meetings, open to the public, that provide input to staff on rural issues and as this report details, recommendations to Council.

In 2016, the Kingston Solar LP (Samsung) Renewable Energy Project – Community Benefit Program was established to help ensure that the Kingston Solar LP (Samsung) Renewable Energy Project provides a positive return to the rural community. During the 20-year lifespan of the project, Kingston Solar LP provides an annual contribution of \$92,000 (\$1,250 per megawatt generated) to the Community Benefit Program Fund.

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The City has discretion regarding the use of the funds provided under the Community Benefit Program so long as they are dedicated to community betterment projects. Kingston Solar LP (Samsung) requested that funds not be used on operational services such as road maintenance, snow removal, etc. Allocations can also include initiatives such as planting trees in the public right of way and on private properties in the area of the Kingston Solar LP (Samsung) properties; park improvements; and acquisition of parkland/natural lands.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the recommendations of the Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group for the allocation of funds from the Samsung Community Benefit Program Fund for:

1. Up to \$10,000 for the implementation of a marketing and communication plan to improve engagement with rural Kingston residents and businesses.
2. Up to \$25,000 for the introduction of pilot project titled the Rural Kingston Community Fund Program that would provide \$5,000 grants to support rural organizations and partnerships to create or enhance events, cultural activities, recreational products, and beautification projects and that Council delegates to the working group the evaluation and approval of projects to be funded.
3. Up to \$100,000 to support Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority community initiatives to be allocated under the direction of the Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY DIRECTOR

**Craig Desjardins, Director, Office
of Strategy, Innovation &
Partnerships**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Ian Semple, Acting Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

The Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group represents the interest of Kingston's rural residents and businesses. This includes farms, community, business and agricultural development. For many years, the group was the Rural Advisory Committee to Council and was changed to a Working Group in January 2024. The purpose of this change was to reduce the formality of meetings required by an advisory committee and to encourage greater discussion between members and City staff.

City staff and the rural working group meet bi-monthly to discuss various topics that impact rural Kingston. The working group has been looking closely at the Samsung Community Benefit Fund exploring a number of different projects that would enhance rural Kingston and provide high value to its residents.

The working group had several conversations about increased communication to rural residents about City initiatives and programs that impact them. The City's Manager of Communications and Public Engagement met with the group to discuss opportunities and challenges related to communications in rural Kingston and provided the group with more information on tactics that could be utilized in the area.

The working group agreed that allocating \$10,000 for 2025 would help increase communication and engagement in rural Kingston. These funds would be utilized at the discretion of City staff to support tactics such as Curbex signs to promote public attendance at working group meetings, a direct mail newsletter with City initiatives and programs directly related to rural Kingston, among others. Provided funding is approved, the group is requesting that staff report back on the impact of 2025 communications tactics to refine future investment.

To further community engagement and impact, the working group also explored the creation of a Community Benefit Fund. Staff presented a plan for a pilot program titled the Rural Kingston Community Program Fund. It would offer up to \$5,000 in funding to support local rural organizations and partnerships to create or enhance events, cultural activities, recreational products, and beautification projects to attract both residents and visitors. Five projects, events or activities with a funding amount of up to \$5,000 for each project would be awarded in 2025 with a total of \$25,000 allocated towards the program. The working group will adjudicate the submissions and select projects based on set criteria in an evaluation matrix developed by staff. The pilot program proposed was endorsed by the working group.

The working group also explored more substantive projects that would enhance rural recreation and provide long-term impact. Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) was invited to present on areas that would benefit from enhanced investment. Staff were directed to have further conversations with CRCA to further refine investment areas and the following allocations were determined:

- Investment for buses from rural Kingston schools to take part in outdoor education field trips at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation area - \$2,500

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- Provide outdoor gathering and communal spaces for use in all seasons (shade & fire pit stations) - \$20,000
- Upgrade the surface of the Little Cataraqui Creek Trail System and improve trail conditions for greater access - \$7,500
- March Maple Madness Pilot: provide transportation to those that do not have access to a vehicle attend Maple Madness offered twice during programming - \$4,500
- Refurbish Maple Wagons: upgrade two out of the four wagons used to transport people to the sugar bush during Maple Madness every year - \$30,000
- Maple Madness Infrastructure Upgrades: upgrade the evaporator house and sugar shack (where pancakes are served) to better support educational demonstrations, increase cooking capacity and allow ease of movement - \$35,500

Total investment would amount to \$100,000 and would enhance recreation opportunities for rural residents and provide long-term improvements. Staff have agreed to work with the CRCA to ensure that projects are implemented as directed.

Background/Analysis

The Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group is looking to advance priorities in rural Kingston including access to infrastructure and programming and enhanced communication to residents. Staff and the working group explored numerous projects inviting several guest speakers and determined areas of high value and impact as outlined in the recommendations. Mechanisms for evaluating progress and impact have been built into the programs and staff will work with CRCA staff to ensure funds are utilized effectively and as directed.

Public Engagement

The Rural Economic and Community Development Working Group represents the interests of rural Kingston residents and businesses and meetings are open to the public.

Climate Risk Considerations

Project funding for CRCA initiatives would reduce greenhouse gas emissions through improved access to public transportation and enhance access to greenspaces through trail improvements.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The recommendations include provisions that would provide increased access to programming and recreation for residents.

Existing Policy/By-Law

None

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Notice Provisions

None

Financial Considerations

The total cost of the recommendations in this report is \$135,000 and will be funded by the Samsung Community Benefit fund which has a current balance of \$760,980.62. Following approval, \$625,980.62 would remain in the fund.

Contacts:

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Exhibits Attached:

None