



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2024

Unique clean energy neighbourhood pilot sees first homes retrofitted and ready to ‘decarb’

VERNON, BC—Eleven local homeowners are on their way to reducing carbon emissions by 85 to 100 per cent after being retrofitted with clean energy systems as part of an exciting neighbourhood-scale pilot—believed to be the first of its kind in Canada.

[HomeZero Collective](#), a local nonprofit, launched its pilot last summer with a call for participants. Each would receive funding and support to make the switch to geothermal or air source heat pumps, hybrid electric hot water tanks, solar panels and electric vehicle charging outlets. In May, ground broke on the first home with geothermal heat pumps and solar panels. Ten of the 11 homes—all located in East Hill and Foothills—will be complete by early August.

“Getting these homes retrofitted is a big step for our model and for the homeowners,” says Amandeep Singh, founder of HomeZero Collective. “People are keenly aware of the impact of climate change and want to do their part.”

Last fall, HomeZero began the process of selecting participants, guiding them through choosing packages and applying for the Greener Homes Loan and rebates. Even more, all work performed by Okanagan Geothermal, Ground Source Drilling, Okanagan Solar and SkyFire Energy was coordinated.

“Our goal was to take care of all the details, so to have the installations go smoothly was important, but we knew we also had to make it feasible,” says Singh, who led a feasibility study in conjunction with Falcon Engineering that highlights how going through the process as a group of neighbours gives people the chance to switch to clean energy systems with lower costs and quality assurance. HomeZero secured additional funding from the Green Municipal Fund and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to subsidize making pilot homes more energy efficient. “Now these homeowners have that satisfying feeling of coming home to a place powered by clean energy.”

As Leith Skinner prepares to flick the switch on the 30 solar panels of his Foothills home, he says: “We’re hopeful that if we’re careful, the solar will give us nearly all of our electrical energy. Looking at the weather we’ve had, we felt we need to do some things to help Mother Nature out. Some people might think it’s such a big problem, what difference can I make? But a whole bunch of small acts can make a big difference.”

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Skinner’s home was also outfitted with a new cold climate air source heat pump, which exchanges heat with the atmosphere to heat and cool a home, even in temperatures as low as -15C. Seven homeowners chose air source heat pumps, while four went with geothermal heat pumps, which use the heat available in the ground to heat and cool a building.

With the opportunity to create a roadmap that other communities could follow, many organizations and municipalities are watching Vernon and keen to learn from HomeZero.

“We’re looking forward to sharing results with the community as well as what this means for Vernon overall and what else could be possible when we come together for a project like this,” says Singh.

Those interested in learning more can tune into the webinar ‘[Decarb Lunch: HomeZero Clean Energy Retrofits in Vernon](#)’ being held Friday, June 28 at 12 pm, hosted by ZEB’x (Zero Emissions Building Exchange).

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ABOUT HOMEZERO COLLECTIVE

Since 2020, HomeZero Collective Society has been hard at work on the plans that will give Vernon neighbourhoods the chance to embrace clean energy retrofits with the greatest ease, efficiency, quality and affordability. The unique neighbourhood retrofit model we’ve developed, in consultation with government and private sector stakeholders, is now being tested with the retrofitting of 11 homes in spring and summer 2024. With eyes on Vernon watching for the success of this unique retrofit model pilot, together, we have a rare opportunity to inspire change across Canada.

www.HomeZeroCollective.com

Photos

Photo folder is [here](#) with caption and credit info in file name.

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