

Social Innovation in Green Communities Canada

**Travis Gliedt, Jennifer Lynes,
Paul Parker**

**University of Waterloo
Green Communities Canada**

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pparker@fesmail.uwaterloo.ca

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Social Economy Centre

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Introduction

- ❑ Social Innovation examined in Green Communities Canada
 - a network of non-profit environmental service organizations (ESOs)
- ❑ Social Innovation:
 - links “new ideas” with “pressing unmet needs” to create solutions which “improve peoples’ lives”
 - » (Mulgan et al., 2006)
 - flourishes in areas where:
 - problems are worsening (e.g. climate change)
 - existing models are failing (e.g. federal climate policy)
 - new possibilities are not being adequately exploited (e.g. community solutions to climate change)
 - » (Mulgan et al., 2006)

Background

- Social innovation contributes to collective renewable energy development in Japan:
 - Citizens strongly influenced by:
 - an environmental movement
 - » citizen movement to mitigate climate change
 - » socially responsible energy investment
 - social commitment
 - » sense of ownership of community wind turbine
 - Citizens less influenced by:
 - expected economic return
- Maruyama et al. (2007)

Project Methodology

□ Literature review

- Social innovation
 - Moulaert et al. (2005); Mulgan et al. (2006)
- Environmental sociology
 - Hannigan (2006): 'emergence model' of environment and society
- Social capital
 - 'bonding' responds to shocks (Johannisson and Olaison, 2007)
 - 'bridging' important to regional innovation (Hauser et al., 2007)
 - 'creative social capital' (Tura and Harmaakorpi, 2005)
- Green community entrepreneurship
 - Gliedt and Parker (2007)

□ Key informant interviews

- executive directors of ESOs

□ Data analysis

- project creation; factor identification

Main Findings

- ❑ ESOs use social innovation to:
 - empower citizens to mitigate climate change
 - Tools: social marketing, education, relationship building
 - mobilize resources to improve the capability of communities to satisfy their energy needs
 - Tools: multi-sector partnerships and social capital
 - overcome tension between business, and social / environmental objectives
 - Process: green community entrepreneurship
 - contribute to sustainable development
 - Output: program and service creation and delivery

New Services Created

Energy Related

- Revised Residential Energy Efficiency Audit
- Provincial Low-Income Energy Audit / Retrofit
- Community Energy Planning
- Sustainable Transportation
- Solar Audits
- CFL replacement
- Retrofit Services
- Greening Sacred Spaces

Non-Energy Related

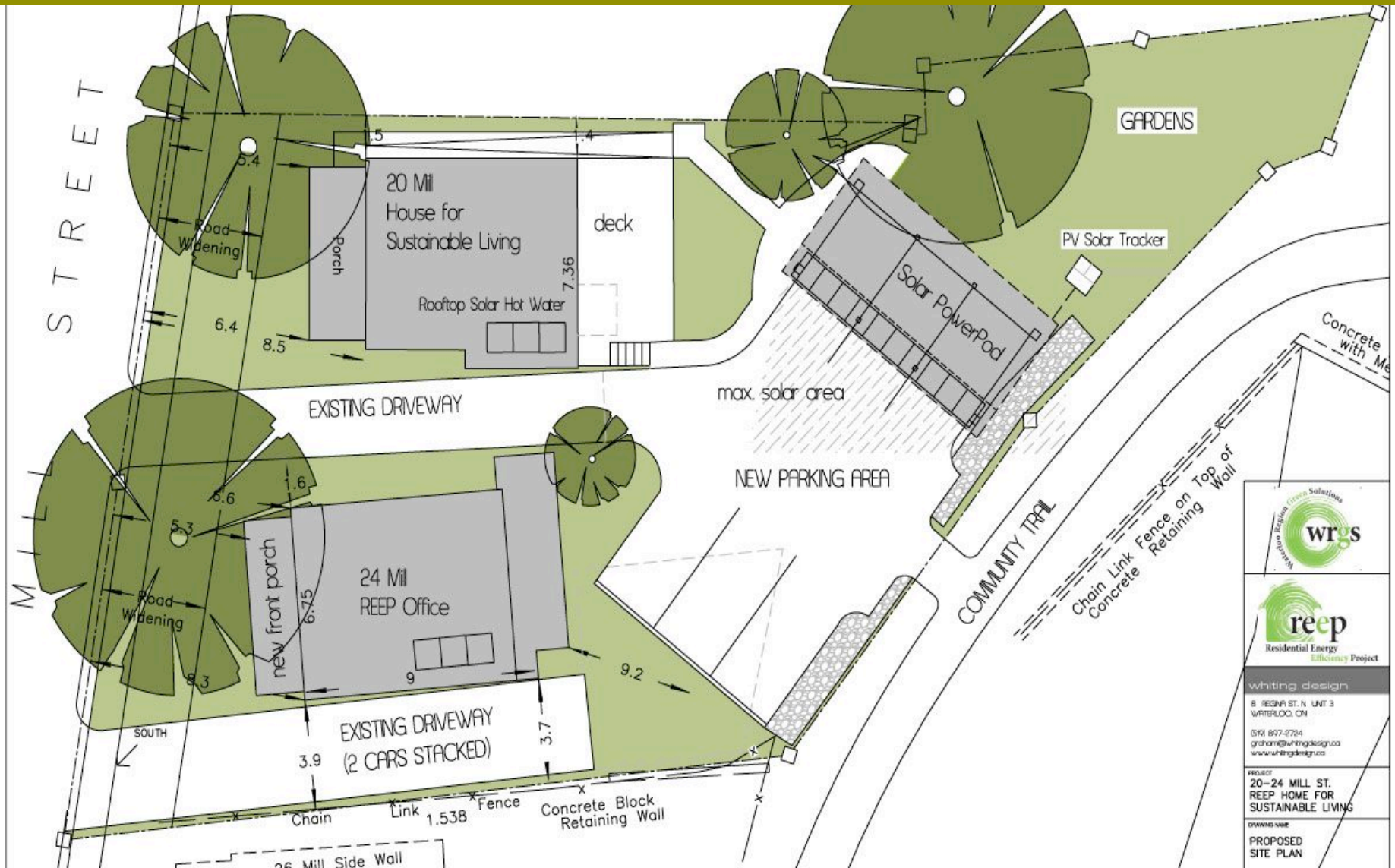
- Watershed Management Program
- Active / Safe Routes to School
- Waste Management / Deflection
- Septic Tank / Well Assessments
- Local Flavour Slow Food Program
- Community Environmental Education Program

REEP House for Sustainable Living



Southern Ontario Social Economy Community-University Research Alliance Symposium 2008

REEP House Site Plan




 Whiting Design Group
 Residential Energy Efficiency Project
 whiting design
 8 REGINA ST. N. UNIT 3
 WATERLOO, ON
 (514) 897-9794
 graham@whitingdesign.ca
 www.whitingdesign.ca
 PROJECT:
 20-24 MILL ST.
 REEP HOME FOR
 SUSTAINABLE LIVING
 DRAWING NO:
 PROPOSED
 SITE PLAN

Conclusions

- ❑ ESOs are agents of social and environmental change
 - create new services
 - influence behaviour and values
 - incorporate social justice into the economy
 - (e.g. concern for intra and intergenerational equity)
 - link sectors and scales for community energy governance
- ❑ Green communities influence and promote sustainable community development