

Sustainability in the Highlands
Merging **E**conomics and **E**cology

The **H**ighlands **E**co-**A**ction **T**AX

(HEAT)

Reality Check

- Peak oil and climate change are going to cause us to change many aspects of our lives **IN OUR LIFETIMES**
- We have a choice...
 - Create a positive vision for a desirable future or
 - Be forced into something much less attractive

My Highlands Vision



- We are a rural community and we live a rural lifestyle!
- We work where we live
- We have a Highlands Green Building Policy
- We produce the majority of our own basic food
- We have a strong local, rural economy
- We are a resilient and close knit community

Just because you're green...



Doesn't mean you're sustainable

Sustainability

- is a journey where impacts to **society**, the **environment** and the **economy** become one.
- To create **resiliency** within our community, we must learn to live within our **financial and ecological** means.
- This business of sustainability requires all to participate on all levels, where as a community, and as individuals, we **take responsibility for the way we live** to create a better future for ourselves and all those who follow.

The **H**ighlands **E**co-**A**ction **T**ax

- **Municipal taxes may be one tool used to encourage sustainability for the common good.**
- **We must look at the economics of sustainability.**

It's time to apply the HEAT

Proposal for Discussion

- A Highlands Eco-Action tax (or HEAT) can be applied with a stick or carrot method.
- The “stick” method of forcing change involves a tax
- The same concept may be applied to a “carrot” method which will be discussed later.

A Stick can be beautiful



We just need to have some vision

Increase municipal taxes by 50%

This accounts for the impacts to
NATURAL CAPITAL!

YIKES

- **THE GOOD NEWS** - This increase can be offset by up to **60%**
- Here's the rational... our homes and the way we live within them impacts natural capital...locally and globally
- Natural Capital is the sum total of all resources for all living things.
- It's time for a paradigm shift in taxation to include environmental costs to buffer our community from the effects of climate change, economic instability, peak oil, and energy and food security.

HEAT Offsets

Offsets occur by reducing ones impact on natural capital three major ways.

- 1) Environmental capital (lifestyle changes and efficiencies) 
- 2) Social capital (volunteerism), 
- 3) Financial capital. \$\$\$

9 offset categories

10% (or 10 points) maximum/category

Driving

Vehicle type or number of motorized trips in and out of the Highlands per week per household.

- One or less 10% (10 points)
- Electric vehicle 10% (10 points)
- Biodiesel vehicle 5% (5 points)
- Super efficient gas engine or hybrid 5% (5 points)

House Size

total ft² living space per occupant at your address

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| ■ Less than 450 ft ² | 10% (10 points) |
| ■ Less than 475 ft ² | 7.5% (7.5 points) |
| ■ Less than 500 ft ² | 5% (5 points) |
| ■ Less than 525 ft ² | 2.5% (2.5 points) |



How many people live
in your home?

Home Energuide Rating

Home energy audit performed by CityGreen. They will inform homeowner of the many possible grants available for improvements

- Greater than 80 on the energuide scale
2.5% (2.5 points)
- Greater than 83 on the energuide scale
5% (5 points)
- Greater than 86 on the energuide scale
7.5% (7.5 points)
- Greater than 90 on the energuide scale
10% (10 points)

Water Consumption

- Install aerators/low flow fixtures/reduce water pressure
 - 2.5% (2.5 points)
- Installed all low flush toilets in home
 - 3% (3 points)
- Collect and use rainwater (>4000 G of storage)
 - 5% (5 points)
- Installed all ultra low flush/dual flush toilets
 - 5% (5 points)
- Installed all waterless composting toilets in home
 - 10% (10 points)

Energy consumption electrical usage from Hydro bill

- Use <6500kWh per year
- Use <6000kWh per year
- Use <5500kWh per year
- Use <5000kWh per year
- 2.5% (2.5 points)
- 5% (5 points)
- 7.5% (7.5 points)
- 10% (10 points)



Home Based Business

- Someone at your address operates a small home based business registered with the Highlands ■ 5% (5 points)
- More than 10% of customers are in the Highlands ■ 5% (5 points)
- This business is considered Eco-friendly ■ 5% (5 points)

Food Production on Your Land



- Produce the majority of our summer vegetables 5% (5 points)
- Store much of our food crops for winter use 5% (5 points)
- Livestock or chickens for meat/eggs/milk 5% (5 points)
- Share/trade/sell food to others 5% (5 points)
- Produce a value added food product for sale 5% (5 points)

Volunteerism: Family members are actively involved in recognized Highland community groups. Total groups per household.

- Involved with one group 2.5% (2.5 points)
- Involved with two groups 5% (5 points)
- Involved with three groups 7.5% (7.5 points)
- Involved with four groups 10% (10 points)
- Fire department volunteer 5% (5 points)

Bonus offset category:

Briefly describe other areas where you feel that you personally have contributed to the sustainability of the Highlands. (maximum 10% or 10 points...rate yourself)

- Part of your land has restrictive protective covenants
- You volunteer to help at community events
- You have installed sustainable energy technologies
- You serve or have served on council
- You are working to restore ecologically sensitive areas of your land
- **Any other ways you give to your community???**

Carrot or Stick



- Perhaps the best results would be a combination of the two approaches (carrot and stick) starting with the “Highlands Eco-Rock Awards” (HERA) and perhaps the HEAT tax portion being brought in after a few years.)

Highlands Eco-Rock Award

**Very grounding!
Are you a HIGHLAND ROCK or silt?
Add up your points.**

Silt	Sand	Pebbles	Stones	ROCKS
>5 points	5-10 points	11-29 points	30-49 points	>50 points

Why? What are the benefits?

- **Educational** - encourages residents to start thinking about sustainability and what it looks like.
- It addresses **water conservation, energy conservation, driving habits, community involvement, carbon reduction, local food, community resiliency, home based business, and community pride.**
- Provides a **local economic stimulus** as our citizens start making some changes to their homes.
- Corresponds nicely to the 2009 Home Renovation Tax Credit on expenditures up to \$10,000 for a maximum tax saving of \$1,350. deadline is Feb 1, 2010.

More Benefits

- 
- Inspirational
 - excites the community
 - Fun competition
 - social pressure to achieve certain levels of sustainability – create a sustainability pride within our community.

And More Benefits

- Data collection – Monitoring progress
 - Create data bases including baseline information to track progress.
 - Gather information in order to properly structure a Highlands Eco-Action Tax (HEAT) to ensure that the tax produces enough extra revenue to cover the costs of implementing and monitoring...perhaps even extra funds for other purposes.
- HAPI – This could also form the framework for the “Highlands Actual Progress Indicator”

And Yes...Even more benefits

- Ties in nicely with other ideas such a **"Highlands Green Building Code"** which incorporates more sustainable land use practices and municipal planning.
- Ties in with the secondary suite issues. Something called **"Sustainably Suite"** for the Highlands.

A Taxation Paradigm Shift

- Historically taxes were introduced to meet social and economic needs
 - Roads, fire, libraries, schooling, crime protection, etc
- We are undergoing a fundamental shift to include the ecological needs (triple bottom line)
 - Local and global climate change, food sovereignty, energy security, natural capital (water filtration/air purification)
- Taxation needs to evolve to meet our changing municipal needs

Something to Think about

