

Ontario Announces “Smart Ontario” Initiative Set to Save \$75 Million

ONTARIO, CA – The City of Ontario announced that it is moving forward with a citywide infrastructure renewal program that improves safety, efficiency and connectivity all while saving \$75 million in utility and operating costs over the life of the new equipment. Aptly named “Smart Ontario,” this initiative will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 10,000 tons annually. This is equivalent to powering 1,322 Ontario homes, removing 1,850 cars from the road and preserving more than 263,000 trees from deforestation each year.

The initiative began in January 2019 when the City sought a building technologies and energy services provider to perform an energy audit of its infrastructure. With the inquiry, Ontario’s City Council hoped to find ways to save resources that were being used to repair and operate failing, antiquated equipment. In May 2019, the City selected Climatec for the job, an energy services provider qualified by the Department of Energy and accredited by the National Association of Energy Service Companies. During the facility audit, Climatec’s team uncovered a number of areas where obsolete equipment could be replaced, and renewable energy systems could be installed to save the City millions of dollars in operational costs. Once City staff verified Climatec’s recommendations, the next step became addressing these opportunities to preserve taxpayer dollars. Protecting the health and safety of the community at large and setting Ontario on the path to becoming a smart city are added benefits.

To fund the program, Ontario plans to leverage funds from several sources, including the California Energy Commission Energy Conservation Assistance Act (ECAA), Southern California Edison utility rebates, California Self-Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) and a tax-exempt municipal lease at historically low interest rates. This creative funding approach allows the City to make significant upgrades to its old infrastructure and to implement sustainability initiatives without tapping into capital or general fund dollars.

“The City is committed to exploring all environmentally conscious options that are available to us,” said Ontario Mayor Paul Leon. “This investment is going to alleviate both our budget constraints and the environmental pressures we face. It’s a no-brainer considering these improvements came to us at extremely competitive rates, pay for themselves over time, inject more life into our local construction economy and free up resources for vital programs and services our community has come to rely on the City for.”

In July 2020, the Ontario City Council approved the recommended scope of work. These improvements included LED streetlight conversions equipped with smart streetlight dimming controls; new high-efficiency heating, cooling and ventilation equipment and temperature controls; interior and exterior LED lighting throughout buildings and parks; solar panel structures at the Convention Center, Toyota Arena and City Hall Annex; solar thermal systems at Westwind and Dorothy Quesada swim centers; and battery storage systems for backup power at critical sites.

“The City constantly strives for fiscal prudence in order to ensure our community’s sustainability and resiliency,” said Scott Ochoa, Ontario City Manager. “By improving the efficiency of our

infrastructure on this scale, the City is able to reallocate taxpayer dollars for better uses, such as recovering from the pandemic.”

Of the \$75 million in program savings, an estimated \$56 million is from operating savings thanks to greater efficiency and \$19 million is from avoided capital expenses that would otherwise be spent on repairing critical infrastructure that this program replaces. The entire program will cost approximately \$35 million.

Construction is well underway with completion expected by Summer 2022.

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About the City of Ontario

The City of Ontario *Elevates* the quality-of-life by creating urban lifestyle districts that create sustainable places to live, work and play. Located just 35 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, the City of Ontario is ideally situated as a gateway to Southern California. With major freeways, rail transportation and International Airport, Ontario offers the rest of the world to be a part of a culturally diverse community with rich history that is well positioned for quality development and economic sustainability for its 185,000 residents. Complementing its business and residential core, Ontario offers premium entertainment venues such as the Ontario Convention Center, Toyota Arena, and the Ontario Mills Mall. To learn more about the City of Ontario, visit www.ontarioca.gov or call (909) 395-2000.