

Parks and Environment Committee

Meeting No.	16 (Special)	Contact	Dela Ting, Acting Administrator
Meeting Date	Wednesday, May 21, 2008	Phone	416-397-7769
Start Time	3:00 PM	E-mail	pec@toronto.ca
Location	Council Chamber, City Hall		

Parks and Environment Committee		
Councillor Paula Fletcher (Chair) Councillor Raymond Cho (Vice-Chair - Parks)	Councillor Gord Perks (Vice-Chair - Environment) Councillor Pam McConnell	Councillor Ron Moeser Councillor Michael Walker

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Declarations of Interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act**Speakers/Presentations: A complete list will be distributed at the meeting****Communications/Reports**

PE16.1	ACTION			Ward: All
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Climate Change Adaptation Strategy**(Staff Presentation)**

(May 13, 2008) Report from Director, Toronto Environment Office, addressed to the Executive Committee

Recommendations

The Director of the Toronto Environment Office recommends that:

1. in order to adapt to the long-lasting change in weather patterns due to climate change, City Council direct that climate change mitigation measures and explicit goals for adaptation of infrastructure and buildings be incorporated into Toronto's Official Plan and request that the Chief Planner report on the amendments appropriate to the Official Plan incorporating such measures;
2. City Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Corporations and Divisions likely to be strongly affected by climate change also be requested to incorporate climate change mitigation measures and explicit goals for adaptation in their plans, programs, strategies and assessment procedures;
3. City Council request all City Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Corporations and Divisions to incorporate climate change concerns into planning for 2009, and identify in their 2009 budget submissions specific actions and programs they plan to undertake regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation, including, but not limited to the Council direction provided through the adoption of the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan;
4. the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer report back on a funding strategy for climate change adaptation planning and actions, including the creation of an Extreme Weather Reserve, the purpose of which is to mitigate the expenditure impacts arising from extreme weather conditions by providing funding at the end of the year to offset wholly or partly a budget shortfall resulting from unbudgeted and uninsured extreme weather-related costs incurred during the year;

5. the Director of the Toronto Environment Office support the work of the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer cited above in Recommendation No. 4, by establishing, in consultation with the Climate Change Adaptation Steering Group, a methodology to prioritize short-term Climate Change Adaptation actions recommended by City Divisions prior to the 2009 Budget Cycle process;
6. the Director of the Toronto Environment Office establish a process for the development of a longer-term, comprehensive adaptation strategy, that: identifies key vulnerabilities to climate change of the City, including financial vulnerability; prioritizes risks; identifies, assesses and implements adaptation actions that will reduce vulnerability; and takes advantage of opportunities presented by a changing climate; and
7. to support co-operation, communications and research among Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments, universities, colleges and non-governmental organizations on climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and strategies relevant to the City of Toronto and other urban centres, City Council authorize the Director of the Toronto Environment Office to co-ordinate City staff participation in the establishment and development of the proposed Urban Climate Change Network.

Financial Impact

There are financial impacts associated with the adoption of the recommendations in this report. Potential Short-term Climate Adaptation Actions recommended by City Divisions, outlined in Appendix C, represent significant costs to the City. A methodology will be required to prioritize the list of Potential Short-term Climate Adaptation Actions recommended by City Divisions. City Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Corporations and Divisions will report out through the 2009 Budget cycle process on financial impacts of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer will report out on the establishment of an Extreme Weather Reserve through the 2009 budget process.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Summary

In July 2007 Toronto City Council unanimously adopted the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan (the “Climate Change Action Plan”). The central focus of the plan is the reduction of greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere by curbing the burning of fossil fuels to help fight global warming.

The Climate Change Action Plan includes many commitments including: energy conservation and efficiency measures; increased use of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar; sustainable transportation practices, such as increased public transit through new streetcar lines; doubling the tree canopy; and promoting the purchase of food grown locally to reduce the distance that our food travels from the field to our kitchen tables. Activities like these, whose primary goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, are referred to as climate change “mitigation”.

In adopting the Climate Change Action Plan, City Council also directed that a plan be established to reduce the negative impacts of unavoidable changes to climate that are already underway, including: extreme heat; more intense storms; floods and droughts; damaging insects; and newly introduced diseases. Activities intended to reduce the effects of unavoidable climate change are referred to as climate change “adaptation”.

Climate change involves a long-lasting shift in weather patterns. Our infrastructure and buildings will need to withstand weather that is different from the past. In addition, climate change has the potential to significantly affect many civic programs and services such as public health, water supply, storm water management and urban parks, forests and ecosystems. Special attention will be required for isolated seniors, the homeless and others who are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather. This staff report responds to Council’s direction that a climate change adaptation strategy be developed. It is intended to lay the foundation for a comprehensive climate change adaptation strategy, which will strive to prevent or minimize the negative effects of unavoidable climate change and take advantage of potential opportunities.

In keeping with the direction of the Climate Change Action Plan, the adaptation strategy is aimed at both City services and the larger Toronto community. It is designed to help protect the health of Torontonians, introduce measures to strengthen our infrastructure and building stock, help protect the natural environment from the negative effects of climate change, and support a resilient economy.

Background Information

Staff Report

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-12950.pdf>

Ahead of the Storm: Preparing Toronto for Climate Change - Highlights

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-12951.pdf>

Announcement from Chair, Parks and Environment Committee

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-12954.pdf>