



May 4, 2017

Councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon
Chair, Parks & Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite B28
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**Re: City of Toronto Parks & Environment Committee Agenda Item PE 19.4:
TransformTO - Climate Action for a Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Toronto /
Pathway to a Low Carbon Future**

Dear Councillor McMahon and committee members:

On behalf of the University of Toronto I am writing to express strong support for TransformTO: Climate Action for a Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Toronto - Report 2 - The Pathway to a Low Carbon Future. By proposing a series of climate change initiatives that are timely, important, and meaningful, this report outlines a clear commitment and a deliberate approach to managing what has quickly become the most pressing issue of our time.

It is increasingly apparent that cities are at the forefront of climate action around the world. The City of Toronto has long been a global leader in this area and the strategy proposed in this report will allow the City to maintain its momentum and leadership on the crucial issue of climate action.

Together with Professors Marianne Hatzopoulou (Associate Professor of Transportation Engineering & Planning; and Canada Research Chair in Transportation and Air Quality) and Blake Poland (Associate Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health; and Senior Fellow, Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research), I had the pleasure of serving on the Modelling Advisory Group for TransformTO, which carefully reviewed the detailed modelling on climate change mitigation which underlies the current report.

The University of Toronto appreciates the strong partnership we have with the City of Toronto and my colleagues and I welcome the opportunity for further collaboration. We were delighted to see City Councillors participating in the "Toronto Sustainability Summit" U of T hosted last month and we thank Councillor McMahon for joining us and Chief City Planner Jennifer Keesmaat for leading a panel.

Currently, there are more than 200 faculty members across all three U of T campuses and in a variety of disciplines who are leading research and innovation in fields related to climate change and sustainability: energy, environment, cleantech, biofuels, the built environment, urban sustainability, public health, and environmental policy and law, to name a few. Often this work is in collaboration with leading national and international organizations. I have attached for your interest an appendix listing some of the environment and climate change initiatives being carried out at the University.

We look forward to the Committee's decision on this matter and to continuing to work together on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JR', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Robinson
Presidential Advisor on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability
Professor | Munk School of Global Affairs
Professor | School of the Environment
University of Toronto

cc Councillor Sarah Doucette (Vice Chair); Councillor Maria Augimeri;
Councillor Shelley Carroll; Councillor Mike Layton; Councillor Josh Matlow

Appendix: A Sampling of current U of T activity in the climate change and sustainability arena

- There is a tri-campus clean-tech challenge to encourage environment and energy-related entrepreneurship;
- \$750,000 has been distributed over three years for climate-change related research and education initiatives;
- There is prioritization of climate change-related themes in selected programs and curricula;
- The U of T is formally adopting substantially more rigorous energy efficiency standards for capital projects;
- Further opportunities to use U of T facilities for environmental and sustainability research and renewable energy projects are being pursued;
- A U of T "Committee on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability" has been established with a mandate to coordinate and advance environmental research, innovation, education and energy consumption initiatives;
- The downtown Toronto campus offers more than 3,000 trees and hundreds of green spaces such as gardens, green roofs and green or living walls;
- The main campus uses less energy and water than it did in 2000 – despite a 50% cent increase in the student population and the construction of 25 new buildings that added more than 3 million square feet to campus;
- Our downtown campus also has one of the most comprehensive recycling programs and highest waste diversion rates of any post-secondary institution in North America;
- At the U of T Scarborough, a farmer's market brings local farmers, producers and artisans to campus every Wednesday. A garden in the valley produces about 35 kilograms of produce while a rooftop garden produces another 140 kilograms per year;
- There are 12 LEED-certified buildings (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) at the U of T;
- The University's "Green Revolving Fund" is one of the largest in North America, providing funding for significant energy reduction projects and building retrofits. In 2016, there was an increase in the "Utilities Reduction Revolving Fund" by 50 %, from \$5 million to \$7.5 million, to encourage more extensive implementation of energy-saving retrofits in our buildings; The University has been able avoid over 50,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas and has saved approximately \$40 million in utility expenses over the past decade;
- There are hundreds of courses and dozens of research labs and programs on environmental and sustainability issues at U of T.