

TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Summary of Public and Stakeholder Consultations (2018-2021)

TransformTO, the City's climate action strategy, is built upon a solid foundation of public engagement. Since its inception in 2015, the City of Toronto has engaged residents in a wide variety of ways, in all corners of the city, and in all walks of life through public meetings, community discussions, surveys, social media, web content, videos, presentations and the TransformTO Reference Panel on Climate Action. Residents, businesses, organizations and other stakeholders have provided detailed feedback on climate action that has helped to shape TransformTO into a long-term, comprehensive, community-wide strategy on addressing climate change in Toronto.

Building on the initial consultations in 2015/2016 for the first iteration of TransformTO, the Environment and Energy Division has organized subsequent consultations on implementation plans and the Net Zero Strategy, and also collaborated with the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild on incorporating climate and resilience considerations into the TORR report. What follows here is a summary of these consultations between 2018 and 2021. Additional detail can be found in the summary reports on the TransformTO webpage at www.toronto.ca/transformto.

2018

Indigenous Climate Action Report

The City of Toronto's Environment & Energy Division worked with the Resilience Office to develop a framework for collaboration to guide future efforts to involve Indigenous Traditional Knowledges (ITK) and Indigenous communities in designing and delivering urban climate action in Toronto. To initiate the framework development the City partnered with Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) to design, host, and report on conversations with Indigenous communities on urban climate action. In October 2018, an Indigenous Knowledge Workshop was held as an opportunity for mutual learning with Indigenous communities about their worldviews, environmental ITK, and ideas for developing a process for ongoing collaborative urban climate action. The Indigenous Knowledge Workshop brought together local Indigenous Peoples in Tkaronto in a small gathering to discuss climate realities, find ways of moving towards a climate just future, and identifying opportunities to collaborate with the City on advancing Indigenous climate justice.

A number of key recommendations and themes emerged from the Indigenous Knowledge Workshop, including:

- The need for more meaningful Indigenous engagement
- Bringing Climate and “the Environment” out of their silos
- Support for “Full Cost Accounting”
- Engaging respectfully and meaningfully with Indigenous knowledge and practices
- Finding ways to accommodate urban Indigenous cultural resurgence
- Reflecting on and relating to the realities “on the street”
- Supporting Indigenous relationships with urban land, water, and food

In 2021, the Environment and Energy division hired an Indigenous Youth Research Associate to assist in developing a strategy for incorporating ongoing Indigenous engagement in TransformTO implementation.

2019

TransformTO Reference Panel on Climate Action

In June 2019, the City sent a letter to 12,500 randomly-selected households inviting recipients to volunteer to join the TransformTO Reference Panel on Climate Action. A Residents' Reference Panel is a group of randomly-selected residents tasked with examining an issue in-depth and making consensus recommendations to governments on behalf of their fellow residents. From the pool of volunteers, members were randomly selected to ensure broad representation from across the city.

Over the course of three days, the 30-member Panel learned about the various ways Toronto can take action on climate change and worked together to recommend climate actions and priorities for the City to undertake from 2021 to 2023 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The final report of the TransformTO Reference Panel on Climate Change is available on the reports page at www.toronto.ca/transformto.

Public Meetings (Summer and Fall 2019)

A public meeting regarding the City of Toronto's TransformTO Climate Action Strategy took place on August 8 at the Scarborough Civic Centre. The meeting was one component of a larger process to gather public input on what actions the City should include in implementation plans. In addition to 65 members of the general public, the meeting was also attended by 12 Panelists from the TransformTO Reference Panel. Panelists attended the meeting to gather public input to help inform their deliberations and ultimate recommendations.

Fall 2019 Public Consultations

Throughout the fall of 2019, the City of Toronto held consultations to collect public feedback on the TransformTO Implementation Plan 2021-2023. Members of the public were encouraged to provide their input on Toronto's climate actions and priorities through the following methods:

- Four City-hosted public meetings:
 - October 8- Etobicoke Civic Centre
 - October 17- Warden Hilltop Community Centre
 - October 24- North York Memorial Community Hall
 - October 30- St. Lawrence Market Temporary North Market
- An online survey
- Community-hosted conversation events

Approximately 3,700 Torontonians either filled out an online survey, attended a public meeting hosted by the City, or attended a community-hosted consultation. Participants were asked for feedback on climate actions in four different thematic areas: Buildings and Energy, Transportation, Financial Tools and Governance, and Other Areas (which included Waste, Sustainable Consumption and Lifecycle Emissions, Leading by Example, and Engagement and Collaboration).

Generally, participants supported most of the actions presented for inclusion in the Implementation Plan 2021-2023. Eighty per cent of participants to the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that the suite of proposed actions would put Toronto on a path towards substantial GHG reductions while improving social equity, health, resilience, and the economy. In fact, no action presented in the survey received less than 68% support. The City's climate emergency declaration was top-of-mind for many participants. There were many comments and suggestions about how the Plan might be improved and actions accelerated to meet the City's new target of carbon neutrality by 2050 or earlier.

Several overarching recommendations emerged from all of the consultation activities:

- Take faster, bolder, and more strategic action on climate. Participants urged the City to ensure the actions in the Plan are commensurate with the climate emergency declared on October 2, 2019, and expressed worry about the slow pace of progress. Many participants endorsed the City speeding up timelines on implementation of all of the proposed actions, quickly acting on any actions that would be both easy to execute and effective in reducing GHGs, setting more short-term goals and targets in all areas, and not being afraid to introduce stronger regulations and penalties to ensure faster progress.
- Be fair and equitable. Many participants were particularly concerned about the possible impacts of some of the proposed actions on equity-seeking groups, particularly low-income people, racialized people, and people living with disabilities. For example, many participants urged the City to consider the equity implications of actions that discourage driving without providing improvements to transit. Participants also suggested the City should be more explicit in the Plan about how TransformTO will consider and incorporate social equity into all of the actions.

Stakeholder consultation

In 2019, the City consulted with external stakeholders to obtain their views and input to inform the TransformTO short-term implementation plan. Over 120 stakeholder organizations were consulted through individual meetings and multi-stakeholder workshops.

Two half-day workshops took place in September at City Hall and North York Civic Centre. Diverse organizations were invited to participate, including non-governmental, private, government, academic, and youth organizations. Discussion topics included buildings, energy, transportation, lifecycle/food, finance/governance, climate, health, equity, economic prosperity, and resilience. Stakeholder organizations provided

feedback and advice on a set of climate actions proposed by staff for short-term implementation of TransformTO by the City and partners.

Feedback received from the stakeholders included strong support for:

- Building energy ratings and labelling
- Expanded transit priority corridors
- Measures to encourage active transportation
- Institutionalizing climate considerations into all City decision making through a climate lens
- Increased engagement and collaboration
- A climate advisory group
- Dedicated coordinators to work in communities and facilitate and inspire local climate action

Other feedback was consistent with the public consultation recommendations including:

- Overall the actions need to bring greater sense of urgency and ambition
- Social equity needs to be a central consideration when developing and implementing climate actions.

2020

Staff from the Environment and Energy Division were redeployed to the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild in 2020. Part of their role was to engage with the public and stakeholders on climate and resilience considerations that were ultimately incorporated into the TORR *COVID-19 Impacts and Opportunities* report. Engagement as part of this process included:

- TORR Public Survey: An online public survey was available from May 26 to July 15, 2020. The questions focused on identifying and understanding the top priorities, challenges and ideas of respondents. The City's 311 call centre accepted phone-in responses in multiple languages. In total, 13,796 people responded to the survey.
- Theme-Based Roundtable Discussions: City staff coordinated roundtable discussions by phone and video on key social, community and economic themes. These facilitated sessions were organized around the questions developed for the public survey and discussion guide.
- TORR engagement on climate change and resilience: This process focused on hearing the perspectives of community organizations and experts across all sectors including buildings, energy, transportation and finance, and included:
 - Over 130 representatives from approximately 76 groups participated in meetings on climate change and resilience. Other theme-based discussions focussed on, and received input on, other elements of community resilience.

The climate and resilience work of TORR was also informed by the TransformTO consultation and broad consultation and engagement during the development of Toronto’s Resilience Strategy throughout 2018 and 2019.

2021

The City hosted public consultations for the development of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy between late June and early August, 2021. The consultation program consisted of:

- A Community Discussion Guide
- A Net Zero Strategy and Climate Actions Backgrounder
- An explainer video
- An online survey
- An online Idea Board

During the consultation period approximately 1,025 Torontonians and interested parties participated in the online survey, 677 viewed the explainer video, 110 submitted ideas on the Idea Board, and 66 participated in 10 community discussions.

Participants were asked to prioritize climate actions in the following areas:

- Buildings
- Energy
- Transportation
- Sustainable consumption and waste
- Greenspace
- Decision-making and equitable engagement

Of the climate actions within these categories, participants rated the following as the highest priorities:

Buildings

Climate action	% of survey respondents who identified the action as high priority for implementation
Support early action to make retrofits that improve efficiency, comfort and the switch off fossil fuel heating easier and more affordable for home and building owners.	72%
Continue to implement the Toronto Green Standard sustainable design requirements for new developments and require net zero ready private buildings by 2030 or sooner.	69%
Set requirements to report on and limit greenhouse gas emissions from homes and buildings.	40%

Energy

Climate action	% of survey respondents who identified the action as high priority for implementation
Increase installation of rooftop and ground mount solar panels.	70%
Work with other levels of government to ensure low-carbon and resilient energy policies to enable local solutions.	58%
Support district energy system owners and developers with the implementation of low-carbon energy solutions.	53%

Transportation

Climate action	% of survey respondents who identified the action as high priority for implementation
Expand public transit and accelerate implementation of bus rapid transit.	67%
Expand bike and pedestrian infrastructure and priority zones.	65%
Continue electrification of the TTC fleet.	44%

Sustainable Consumption and Waste

Climate action	% of survey respondents who identified the action as high priority for implementation
Reduce city-wide material consumption and increase circularity (i.e., efficient re-use and recovery of resources).	78%
Continue outreach and engagement on city-wide waste reduction and diversion, with a focus on food and organic waste.	40%
Conduct a city-wide consumption-based emissions inventory and set a reduction target.	39%

Greenspace, Decision-making and Equitable Engagement

Climate action	% of survey respondents who identified the action as high priority for implementation
Increase tree canopy cover, biodiversity and enhance greenspaces.	71%
Corporate-wide adoption of a climate lens for all new City operating programs and capital projects to incorporate climate considerations in the municipal decision-making process.	66%
Achieve equitable distribution of the urban forest, increasing tree canopy where it is most needed.	63%
Work with Indigenous communities to share knowledge.	43%

The results from this round of consultation are in alignment with findings from previous engagement. Climate actions listed as the highest priority by respondents continue to be building retrofits and fuel switching, support for the Toronto Green Standard sustainable design requirements, increased local renewable energy generation, enhancements to public and active transportation, improved waste management, increased tree canopy, and a greater emphasis on climate in decision making.

The key difference between the themes in this year's consultation results and the previous results is the sense of urgency. Responses received from this survey are more action-oriented than in previous consultations. Participants strongly believe that the City's focus should be on implementing aggressive climate action and utilizing financial incentives and disincentives, rather than prioritizing education and outreach. However, participants still feel education and outreach are important tactics to continue.

Respondents continue to support the City's investment in infrastructure but feel that it shouldn't be limited to transit and active transportation. For example, many comments received advise the City to invest in green energy, low-carbon construction and to subsidize building retrofits and the maintenance of privately-owned mature trees. Participants also acknowledge the importance of city-wide involvement – including individuals, organizations and corporations – in developing and delivering on climate action to achieve the medium and long-term TransformTO targets.

Stakeholder consultation.

Members of the Net Zero External Advisory Group (July – November 2021) were convened at a virtual meeting in July to obtain their input. Advisory Group members received a presentation about the upcoming Net Zero Strategy, GHG modelling results, and some draft 2030 targets and actions proposed for inclusion in the Net Zero Strategy. Using an online whiteboard application and working in sector-specific break-out groups, members provided written input on draft targets and actions of the Net Zero Strategy. Members also provided input on how the targets, actions, and other elements

of the Strategy can be improved to enhance equity in the implementation of TransformTO. Feedback was collected through the whiteboard exercise, live Q&A session, and meeting chat.

Advisory Group members provided sector-specific expert recommendations. In addition, members provided overall recommendations that were generally consistent with earlier stakeholder input and public consultation, including:

- Having the goal of net zero at the centre of the strategy is positive. The short-term actions need to be more ambitious and specific as it is not clear they connect with net zero.
- The co-benefits are important.
- Design programs intentionally so they are accessible broadly and accessible to equity-deserving groups and lower-income communities.
- Different groups need the opportunity to lead, and to tell us what they need, including equity-deserving communities.
- Land use planning measures should be considered.
- It is important to consider what the costs will be and by whom they will be borne. Costs should not be passed to vulnerable populations.
- Reaching net zero is a monumental challenge requiring everyone's participation. It requires engaging all sectors in achieving these targets.
- Across all sectors, there is a need for encouragement, resources, education, and requirements/regulation.
- There is a need for supportive policy from other levels of government.

Engagement Summary (2019-2021):

The following summary outlines engagement statistics on TransformTO since 2019:

Surveys: Approximately 4,000 survey responses (not including TORR survey)

Public meetings: 5, with approximately 350 attendees

Community discussions: 35 discussions with close to 600 participants

Reference Panel: 25 participants

Stakeholder consultation 2019: Over 120 external organizations

Stakeholder consultation 2021: 25 organizations