

IE23.1 Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy

Deputation from Toronto East End Climate Collective (TEECC)

Presented by Don Booth

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My name is Don Booth. I'm a member of Toronto East End Climate Collective. We would like to support the proposed Existing Building Strategy.

More than anything, we are impressed. The city has less authority over the things that create greenhouse gas and has less economic and legislative authority in these matters than the province or the federal government, yet this proposed strategy finds ways to begin the massive undertaking of reducing emissions from existing buildings.

We might call this a "Tesla Strategy." Teslas used to be expensive and unattractive. Well things have changed. People realized that electric cars are fast and fun. Now everyone wants one and I've got "Tesla envy." Well, if you think about it, the first phase is optional - it's when "influencers" retrofit - and then boast about being comfy and paying tiny energy bills. Then we have a race to be first on the block - like getting an affordable Tesla or scoring a vaccine early. Everyone wants to be cool - pun intended. Your committee are the first cool kids. Do this right and retrofits should outpace kitchen renovations.

We have, however, identified two areas where the strategy can be strengthened:

1. Toronto Hydro is not mentioned. Toronto Hydro has the ability to raise tranches of funds along with the ability to collect payment from anyone who owns a building. Working in combination with the proposed Green Bank, Hydro can make the city less reliant on other governments for finance;
2. Work with Planning to end the Yellow Belt. Even a modest increase to density in neighbourhoods of single family homes saves lots of energy. Renovations that turn single family homes into multi-family homes can include retrofits, making the whole process less expensive.

There have been times, some in response to the current pandemic, when the city acknowledged that it could not solve an entire problem without major support from other levels of government. Council took action anyway. This is one of those times. If we put our money where our mouth is we will gain enormous credibility; we can legitimately press the federal government to increase their share and even push the province into action. But that's the thing, we need to actually commit dollars.

We hope that you will support this strategy and that it will go on to receive approval at council. Our concern is that despite approval, the Budget Committee will not find the funds needed to actually put this plan into action.

And when you speak with your colleagues on the Budget Committee I hope you will do so with the four actions that have been omitted at this time because they require a line in the budget.

They are:

- Provide integrated retrofit support - known as “one stop shop”;
- Expand and enhance financing - Let’s get Toronto Hydro and a Green Bank going;
- Advertising and Education - retrofits are more hip than kitchen renos;
- Support workforce development and training - aka. Insulation without any holes;

Be nice. Let the budget committee be cool kids, too.