



# Environmental Task Force Newsletter

Number 1

January 1999

## Toronto Steps Closer to Smog Free Days

One of the biggest problems facing Torontonians is dirty air. Our new City has taken several small but important steps towards reducing smog and improving air quality. The City's Environmental Task Force (ETF) has played a key role in pushing forward many of these policies and initiatives. Since March 1998 the City has:

- adopted the Environmental Task Force's proposal for an ambitious Smog Control Plan, which includes declaring smog alerts during which the City cuts back on its use of energy, city vehicles, lawn mowers and pesticides;
- pushed for vehicle emissions testing, long advocated by former municipalities and Metro Councils, and is finally being implemented by the province;
- reduced the temperature of air conditioning in city buildings during smoggy days;
- considered a policy to reduce pesticide use throughout the city, which was introduced by the Board of Health and the Environmental Task Force;
- endorsed the expansion of the huge building retrofit project known as the Better Buildings Partnership;
- endorsed the deep-lakewater cooling project to replace traditional air conditioning with environmentally advanced district cooling;
- started to build a new composting plant for organic waste that will also generate electricity and hot water for industrial processes from the methane gases; and

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## Council votes for pesticide ban on city land

On December 17, City Council overwhelmingly endorsed a ban in principle on the use of pesticides on city-owned properties. Starting in Spring 1999, the ban will be phased-in. The aim of the first year is to make parks pesticide free in 1999. Details are to be worked out by a new Pesticides Subcommittee that will meet during the winter to work out how to phase-in the ban and under what emergency situations pesticides can still be used. See the next newsletter for an in-depth article.

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# What is the Environmental Task Force?

In March 1998 Toronto City Council created the Environmental Task Force (ETF). Made up of City Councillors, City staff, and representatives from the business, labour, education and environmental communities, the Environmental Task Force has been given the task of helping Toronto become a world leader in environmental sustainability. To that end, the ETF is helping push some important environmental initiatives through the City, some of which have already been enacted. The Environmental Task Force will make a final report to City Council in the fall of 1999.



The Don River and the Bloor Street Viaduct

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first newsletter of Toronto's Environmental Task Force (ETF). In March 1998, the new City of Toronto Council recognized how important environmental issues are to the success of our city and passed a motion to set up the Environmental Task Force. At the ETF, we will be busy during 1999 developing Toronto's first ever Environmental Plan and pushing forward a large number of positive environmental initiatives.

The New Megacity has given us a great opportunity to coordinate and improve on the many positive environmental initiatives that existed under the former municipalities and Metro Toronto. But there is much more still to be done. Last summer was the worst smog season ever. We're in the midst of a garbage crisis. We continue contaminating our ecosystems and our bodies with toxic substances.

The ETF has been extremely busy since March tackling these issues and many others. We have a full plate for 1999. We want you to help us. Here is what you can do:

- Come to our monthly meetings;
- Get involved in one of our workgroups that will be looking at important environmental issues;
- Participate in community consultations on Toronto's first-ever Environmental Plan;
- Get on our mailing list to receive copies of the Environmental Task Force Newsletter;
- Email us your comments and suggestions at [etf@city.toronto.on.ca](mailto:etf@city.toronto.on.ca);
- Browse our Website at [www.city.toronto.on.ca/council/environtf\\_index.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/council/environtf_index.htm).

Whatever you choose, the Environmental Task Force is here to help you make your city an environmentally sustainable city.

Sincerely,

Councillor Jack Layton,  
Chair Environmental Task Force

So far, the ETF has helped push for a City Smog Plan, a City plan to eliminate pesticide use, and for cleaner gas for those who have to drive cars. This fall, we've also pushed ahead with a number of actions which will:

- improve the quality of our water and waterways;
- clean the air we breathe;
- promote land use policies and practices that help the environment;
- reduce toxins entering our bodies and the environment;
- push for sustainable energy use; and
- improve the greenspace in our city.

In 1999, the ETF will be even busier. We will be forming Workgroups to tackle a number of tough issues head-on, including developing the City's first-ever sustainable transportation plan and a sustainable energy use plan. The Task Force will also be developing the first Environmental Plan for the City.

A key concept guiding the Environmental Task Force is sustainability; the idea that every policy, program and activity should achieve positive environmental, economic and social benefits. Sustainability, also known as sustainable development, helps politicians, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and the public come up with win-win-win scenarios.

While much of the Environmental Task Force's work is aimed at promoting sustainability, it is also focusing on issues of governance:

- ensuring proper citizen participation in municipal government decision-making on environmental issues; and,
- creating political and administrative structures that advance the environment and sustainability.

The Environmental Task Force is here to serve the citizens of Toronto. That's why your input is so important. We're doing a lot but there is probably more that we need to do. Give us your ideas and help us make Toronto a truly environmentally sustainable city.

## An Environmental Vision for the City

Pedestrian friendly streets...healthy watersheds...excellent water quality...clean air... efficient use of energy...more greenspace...putting health back in the city and taking toxins out...an environmentally literate city and an environmentally responsible government.

These were some of the visions of the more than 100 people who participated in an Environmental Vision and Priority Setting Workshop in late September 1998. The workshop was hosted by the Environmental Task Force. Task Force members, City Councillors, City staff, representatives from environmental groups, businesses, the education sector, labour unions, and community members from across the new City worked together to develop a shared vision.

The energy and commitment of those at the workshop were evident in developing audacious goals and identifying actions that need to be taken to achieve a vision for the environment and for developing a sustainable Toronto.

Discussions were exciting and provided invaluable information. Task Force members are in the process of reviewing the information to draft vision statements and principles to help guide approaches to environmental issues in the City. A report will be available in January 1999.

## Energy Quick Start Action Workshop Report

Energy efficiency retrofits, committing to a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, supporting a Windmill in Toronto, a carbon trading system, and a carbon emissions cap. These were a few of the many Quick Starts suggested by participants of the Energy Quick Start Action Workshop held on September 14th, 1998. Workshop participants, including energy activists, city staff and ETF members also identified over 40 Priority Issues. The top priority is the need for an energy vision for the New City.

Eleven of the Quick Start actions were sent to a City Council committee for consideration in December 1998. Various city staff and council committees will be considering these actions in the New Year. The remaining Quick Starts and Priority Issues will be considered in the ETF's Environmental Plan to be developed throughout 1999.

## Water Quick Start Action Workshop

Strategies to clean our lake and streams and how to conserve water were the main outcomes of the Water Quick Start Action Workshop held on September 10th, 1998. Over 40 participants, including representatives from the ETF, city staff, community and environmental groups, and the business community generated 77 Priority Issues during their half day meeting.

Six of the 22 Quick Starts defined by the workshop were proposed in a report to a City Council committee in December. Three of the Quick Starts are aimed at improving the Stormwater Management policy in the city by, for example, promoting downspout disconnections. Quick Starts pushing public education and awareness about where our water comes from and how it is treated were also part of the package. The Workshop also recommended developing a Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan which will look into retrofitting public buildings with water saving kits and low-flow toilets.

Various City Council committees will examine these recommendations in the New Year. The remaining Quick Starts and Priority Issues will be considered in the ETF's Environmental Plan to be developed throughout 1999.

## Greenspace/Nature Quick Start Action Workshop

The Environmental Task Force held a workshop on greenspace/nature issues on September 4th, 1998. Participants included members of community and environmental groups, a representative from the Toronto Board of Trade, city staff and Task Force members. The half day workshop identified over 45 Priority Issues. An eco-system approach to land use planning was considered amongst the most important. Over 28 Quick Starts were also identified by Workshop participants.

Five of Quick Starts were submitted to the City's Strategic Policy and Priorities Committee in December, 1998. These included new mowing practices in the city to cut down pesticide use, increasing greenspace naturalization for road corridors, naturalizing the Port Industrial District, and preparing a strategy to green the Toronto City Hall podium.

The remaining Quick Starts and Priority Issues will be considered in the ETF's Environmental Plan to be developed throughout 1999.

## ETF Member Profiles



**Councillor Irene Jones**

Ward 2 - Lakeshore-Queensway 397-9273

Councillor Jones is an active member of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Citizens Concerned About the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront. She has been successful in obtaining Council's approval to install a gate for sewer gas odour for the Berry Road Overflow Chamber of the Humber Treatment Plant, and the greening of several sites such as Brown's Line and the Home Depot. Councillor Jones ensured the former industrial sites in south Etobicoke were tested for pollutants. She promotes using public transit as a way of reducing pollution.



**Councillor Jane Pitfield**

Ward 1 - East York 392-0215

Councillor Pitfield was elected to City Council in September 1998. Her particular environmental interests are water quality, the Deep Lake Water Cooling System, smog reduction and increased public transit.



**Councillor Joan King**

Ward 12 - Seneca Heights 392-4038

Councillor King's affiliations and accomplishments within the environmental field have included chairing the Environment and Public Space Committee at Metro and the Blue Ribbon Task Force. She is currently a member of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). She believes that sustainable development is the key to a good municipal plan.



**Councillor Bill Saundercook**

Ward 27 - York Humber 397-9255

Councillor Saundercook has long been an enthusiastic environmentalist who was responsible for bringing the blue box program to the former City of York. As a member of the Environment Task Force, the 3R's Subcommittee, and the Storm Water Group, he keeps abreast of pressing environmental issues and supports all efforts to improve our environment.



**Councillor Mike Tzekas**

Ward 14 - Scarborough Wexford 392-1372

Councillor Tzekas has a long standing commitment to the environment. He belonged to the former City of Scarborough's Works and Environment Committee and was Council's representative on the Scarborough Citizens' Environmental Advisory Committee. He served on the Don Watershed Regeneration Council and initiated community and Council support for the Massey Creek Regeneration Project at the headwaters of the Don.



**Councillor David Shiner**

Ward 12 - Seneca Heights 395-6413

Councillor Shiner was the Chair of the former City of North York Environment Committee for 6 years. Under his leadership, the Committee reduced the use of pesticides in North York by over 90%. Councillor Shiner is a strong advocate for public transportation and supports a variety of programs designed to reduce dependency on automobiles.



**Councillor Jack Layton**

Ward 25 - Don River 392-4060

Chair of the Environmental Task Force, Councillor Layton has been promoting environmental issues since he was first elected to office in 1982. He is currently Co-chair of the Municipalities Table, a Federal government-sponsored initiative where municipal leaders promote greenhouse gas reduction, and is promoting district energy systems and renewable energy as Commissioner of the Toronto Hydro Electric Commission.



**Councillor John Adams**

Ward 23 - Midtown 392-0013

Councillor Adams is a current member of fifteen committees, boards, and agencies. He chairs the Task Force on Assessment and Tax Policy and is a member of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Councillor Adams has been involved in the Toronto Harbour Commissioners and a number of standing committees, including Land Use and the Board of Health.

*Next Issue: Citizen Member Profiles*

# Did You Know?

- Toronto's Household Hazardous Waste Program is a popular one, with more than 300,000 people using it since start-up. In 1997, 1,500 tonnes of household hazardous waste was diverted from landfill.
- At the 1997 Kyoto Conference on greenhouse gases, Toronto was cited as a world leader in greenhouse gas reductions due to its successful methane gas recovery. The Keele Valley Landfill Site extracts methane gas and uses it to generate electricity at a private power plant located on the site.
- The Elevated Wetlands are functional sculptures located along the Don Valley Parkway near the Don Mills interchange. A solar-run pump lifts polluted water from the Don River into three raised plastic planters to purify it. The water is emptied from the sculptures into a natural wetland, which flows back into the river.
- The City has a Task Force to Bring Back the Don which has been working to restore the Don River since 1989. Through this group, citizens and Councillors have worked together on projects to restore the Don River, educate and involve the public and act as a resource for other Toronto-area watershed organizations.

Ce bulletin renferme des renseignements concernant le Groupe d'étude sur l'environnement. Pour de plus amples détails en français à ce sujet, composez le 338 0338 et demandez à parler dans votre langue.

Questo notiziario contiene informazioni riguardo la Task-force ambientale. Per ottenere informazioni in italiano, siete pregati di chiamare il 338-0338 e identificare, in inglese, la lingua nella quale volete l'interpretazione.

Este boletim informativo, contém informação acerca do Grupo de Trabalho para questões do Meio Ambiente. Para obter informação, em português, ligar para o 338-0338 e, mencionar, em inglês, a língua em que deseja ser atendido.

Este boletín contiene información acerca del Grupo de Trabajo del Medio Ambiente. Para obtener información en español, sírvase llamar al 338-0338 e indique en inglés el idioma que desea que le interpreten.

Niniejszy biuletyn zawiera informacje na temat Grupy Zadaniowej d/s Środowiska. W celu uzyskania informacji w języku polskim, prosimy dzwonić pod numer telefonu 338 0338 podając nazwę języka (Polish).

Wargeyskan waxaad ka heleysaa xog iyo warar ku saabsan Guddiga Wax-Ka-Qabashada arrimaha la xiriiira deegaanka (Environmental Task Force). Si aad ugu hesho wararka la xiriiira deegaanka magaalada Toronto iyo hawsha guddiga Af-Soomaali, fadlan, wac telefoonka lambarkiisu yahay 338-0338, una sheeg afka aad rabto in laguugu tarjumo.

此通訊刊載有關環保工作小組的資料。若要用中文查詢，請電338-0338及用英文說"Chinese"。

Το παρόν δελτίο περιέχει πληροφορίες για την Ομάδα Έρευνας του Περιβάλλοντος. Για πληροφορίες στα Ελληνικά, τηλεφωνήστε στο 338-0338 και πείτε στα αγγλικά για ποια γλώσσα θέλετε διαρμηνεία.

Цей вісник інформує про Дослідчий Комітет Довкілля. Щоб одержати інформації в українській мові просимо телефонувати на число 338-0338 та подати по-англійськи, в якій мові бажаєте одержати переклад.

Tài liệu này nói về Ban Đặc Nhiệm về Môi Trường. Muốn biết thêm chi tiết bằng tiếng Việt, xin gọi số 338-0338 và yêu cầu được thông dịch bằng tiếng Việt Nam.

## Steps Closer to Smog Free Days

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- started a Pedestrian Issues Committee which, along with the Cycling Committee, is working on encouraging transportation by 'human power'.

While the City has taken many positive initiatives in 1998, the ETF is still pushing for even more policies to clean Toronto's air. That is why the ETF has set up workgroups to develop a Sustainable Transportation Plan and a Sustainable Energy Use Plan for the City.

Lots of smog comes from car and truck use in the city. A sustainable transportation plan will identify ways to reduce car use by promoting public transit, bicycle use, and walking.

Smog and dirty air aren't just caused by cars and trucks. Burning gas, oil, coal and other fossil fuels to heat and cool buildings also fouls up the air.

A sustainable energy use plan will help us make our buildings more energy efficient, promote alternative fuel sources such as the sun and wind, as well as allow us to coordinate the development of district energy systems. This will cut down our reliance on fossil fuels and clean our air.

We want your help in creating the best plans for the City. Please come out to the following kick-off meetings:

- Sustainable Transportation Workgroup: Monday, January 25, 1999, 7-9 pm.  
Please call 392-9365 for details and to register.
- Sustainable Energy Use Workgroup: Tuesday, February 9, 1999, 7-9 pm.  
Please call 392-9365 for details and to register.

Tear off and mail back or fax back to: Environmental Task Force  
c/o Fred Hendriks  
North York Civic Centre  
5100 Yonge Street  
North York, Ontario  
M2N 5V7  
Fax: (416) 395-7337

## Environmental Task Force Newsletter

You can get in touch with your Environmental Task Force in any of the following ways listed below:

e-mail: [etf@city.toronto.on.ca](mailto:etf@city.toronto.on.ca)

Website:

[www.city.toronto.on.ca/council/environtf\\_index.htm](http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/council/environtf_index.htm)

Fax: 395-7337

Phone: 392-9365

Mail: Environmental Task Force

c/o Fred Hendriks

North York Civic Centre

5100 Yonge Street

North York, Ontario M2N 5V7



98-562

YES, I want to be involved:

Please put me on the ETF Newsletter mailing list

Please put me on the ETF Meeting Agenda mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_