



**Toronto 2020 Budget Deputation  
January 20, 2019  
Scarborough Civic Centre**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Michael Polanyi, and I am the Climate Campaigner at the Toronto Environmental Alliance, a non-profit organization that educates and advocates for a greener city.

You are leaders at a unique and critical time.

As the recent and unprecedented bushfires in Australia show, we are at a climate tipping point.

The trajectory of future decades depends on the choices and decisions we take today.

You - as City Councillors - have taken important first steps.

In October, you formally declared a climate emergency.

You have committed to transform this city - to make it carbon-free - as early as 2040.

You have committed to accelerate climate action "at every opportunity."

The 2020 City budget is your first opportunity to do so.

It includes some important actions.

It adds 18 new staff, \$5.9M in operating funds, and \$18.9M in capital funding to move forward the Green Will building initiative and other retrofit programs, the Resilience Strategy, renewable energy programs, and planning for achieving Net-Zero emissions.

However, to effectively address the climate emergency, we urge you to make three improvements to the proposed budget: ensure that it achieves sufficient quantified emission reductions; include additional actions to reduce buildings & transportation emissions; and ensure adequate funding for climate action.

**First**, as it stands, the budget fails to deliver adequate, quantified emission reductions.



To meet its 2030 emission target, Toronto needs to reduce emissions by half a megaton per year.

Yet the only quantified emissions reduction in this budget for 2020 is a 0.006 Mt reduction related to the Toronto Green Standard for new buildings.

**TEA urges you to continue to work with staff to ensure that the emission reductions achieved by this Budget in 2020 are adequate to keep Toronto on track to meet its 2030 emission reduction target.**

**Second**, action is needed to ensure the budget delivers sufficient progress in 2020 on key housing and transportation climate actions.

The City has committed to retrofit 100% of residential homes and apartment units by 2050.

It is unclear from the budget what progress will be made towards these goals in 2020.

We're therefore pleased that you have asked for a briefing note on the number of retrofits that will be delivered in 2020, and whether this number can be augmented.

Only 187 homes and 2,200 apartment units were retrofitted through City programs over the last five years. That's less than 0.2% of the City's 1.1 million households.

**TEA therefore calls on Council to ramp up energy retrofits in 2020 by increasing capital funding for HELP & HIRIS programs.**

On transportation, we are concerned about delays in City actions to make transit more affordable, reliable and convenient - the delay in full implementation of the Fair Fare discount pass to 2021, the delay in the order of 200 streetcars needed to ensure system capacity, and the lack of a clear timeline for the completion of 5 recently promised dedicated bus lanes on Finch East, Steeles West, Eglinton East, Jane and Dufferin.

**TEA urges you to make the public transit investments needed to include these commitments in the 2020 budget.**

Finally, we are concerned that investments in climate action are inadequate.



Investment in this budget is far below the \$2B annual investment deemed necessary by the City to achieve its 2050 emission targets.

It is also below that of other leading cities (Vancouver is spending \$80 per resident from its operating budget on climate initiatives; while Toronto is spending \$7).

We welcome the increase to the City Building Fund, in order to make badly needed investments to address the housing crisis and improve transit.

We also welcome your openness to implementing a tax on vacant units, and to increasing the land transfer tax on luxury homes, in order to fund additional new, low carbon affordable housing.

We also urge you to also move forward with establishing the promised dedicated climate fund - and financial mechanisms to support it.

Given support for a commercial parking levy in the TransformTO consultation process, **TEA asks you in particular to direct staff to do the preparatory work needed to implement a parking levy in the 2021 budget cycle.**

Young people are asking today's political decision-makers - are you doing all that you can to protect the planet for our future?

I hope you will listen to them - and take action to ensure that Toronto's 2020 budget strongly reduces emissions, accelerations climate action in the housing and transportation sectors, and invests adequately to address the climate emergency.

**Michael Polanyi  
Climate Campaigner  
Toronto Environmental Alliance**

