

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Mayor John Tory
City Hall, 2nd Floor
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Toronto Hydro mandate

Dear Mayor Tory,

As you may remember, the Climate ACT advisory committee is a collaboration of leading sustainability academics at Toronto's four universities, organized and facilitated by Ontario's former Environment Commissioner to assist Toronto City Councillors to implement Toronto's climate emergency declaration. This committee was organized at the invitation of several councillors, led by Councillor Mike Layton.

At no cost to the city, Climate ACT did extensive research last summer on best practices that Toronto should adopt to achieve the goals of TransformTO.¹ I submitted this research to Executive Committee and to Jim Baxter's group in October 2020. In brief, we documented a substantial gap between TransformTO's ambitious targets and the pace of implementation, and many opportunities to learn from other jurisdictions.

One key gap that we documented is the poor performance of Toronto Hydro compared to other utilities such as Alectra, driven primarily by the lack of appropriate direction from Council. As shown in the energy report prepared at York University, local electricity distribution companies play an essential role in electrification, a critical part of the energy transition. Other cities have been much more successful than Toronto in obtaining appropriate climate leadership from their utilities. The mandate that Toronto City Council has given to Toronto Hydro is extremely weak on issues relating to climate change, and is not integrated with TransformTO. The report included three recommendations relating to Toronto Hydro:

3. Toronto Hydro's role and mandate around microgrid and distributed energy resource (DER) development, and the implementation of TransformTO should be clarified and strengthened.

4. The accountability of city agencies and their senior management for the achievement of TransformTO's specific GHG emission reduction goals within their mandates and areas of operation should be strengthened, including regular progress reporting to council. The City Auditor should report regularly on progress in the implementation of TransformTO.

5. The City of Toronto should initiate discussions with utilities, including ENWave, Enbridge, and Toronto Hydro and other relevant stakeholders around future roles of the natural gas grid, heat pumps, renewable natural gas (RNG), and hydrogen-based technologies in building space heating and cooling.

The current resolution now before Council gives Toronto an important opportunity to catch up on these gaps. Unfortunately, the current text of the resolution is a missed opportunity, and will leave Toronto increasingly far behind best practices elsewhere.

We would be happy to provide further information at your convenience.

Yours very truly,



Climate ACT advisory committee

c.c. Councillors !
Linda Swanston !
Toronto Hydro !

ⁱ We trust you are aware of the excellent [municipal green recovery proposals](#) of the Climate Caucus, the non-partisan network of climate-focussed mayors and councillors across Canada.