

Deputation to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, Revised  
on TransformTO's Net Zero Strategy  
December 2, 2021  
Liz Addison, ClimateFast

Good afternoon and thank you so much for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Liz Addison, and I'm speaking today as a long-time resident of Ward 11, a member of ClimateFast among other climate action groups, and, recently, one of the City's Neighbourhood Climate Action Champions.

First I want to congratulate all the contributors to the Net Zero Strategy for producing this excellent plan. I was especially glad to see accelerated emissions reduction targets which will vastly reduce the city's accumulated carbon emissions. I'm also encouraged by the Strategy's call for a carbon budget which will make possible the tracking of climate actions against emission targets. It's been proven time and again that you can control only what you measure.

I also hope the Committee is willing to endorse recommendations with significant financial ramifications, recognizing that failure to make these investments today will be far more costly tomorrow as the impacts of climate change inevitably make themselves felt. I also hope the City will explore all potential revenue tools to ensure required funds are available.

While I applaud the Strategy's ambitious and farsighted approach, I think three improvements related to the speed of implementation could be made.

With respect to new construction, the proposed policy will not require near-zero construction until 2032-33. We need net-zero building requirements before 2030. Vancouver, to use a Canadian example, is far ahead of us on green construction.

With respect to transportation, the city's second-largest source of greenhouse gases, the Strategy does not include on-street charging stations in the short-term implementation plan. The City should work to expand on-street charging beginning in 2022. Toronto's residents will not switch to electric vehicles without this basic infrastructure.

Also, full and timely implementation of this strategy is dependent on key pieces of technology which exist but which are not available in Toronto in the quantity and at the prices needed for at-scale transformation of our energy, building and transportation sectors. The City should lead in the development of programs to manufacture, finance and bulk-purchase green technologies and to train the skilled workers needed to install and operate these technologies.

And finally, my hope is that the City will put in place an organizational structure with the authority and capability to ensure that decisions are made, personnel put in place, bylaws passed, public agencies aligned, and communities and the private sector engaged to turn targets into action and ambition into real change.

This is an excellent strategy, one that I hope will win this committee's full support.