



DEPUTATION FOR ITEM IE:26:16

December 2nd, 2021

IEC COMMITTEE

Dear Chair and Councillors,

I am Co-Chair of the citizens climate advocacy group ClimateFast and a resident of Ward 12. We are incredibly proud of Toronto at this moment. We are very thankful to staff for following through on the Climate Emergency Declaration commitment of 2019, despite all of the difficulties we have been through, They have brought before you today a plan to achieve Net Zero by 2040.

This is a visionary plan. Toronto is the first city in Canada to consider such a goal. To adopt this is to show true climate leadership as the city has done before, most recently when endorsing the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty on July 15th. This comprehensive plan gives us hope for the future. But a plan is only as good as its implementation. We must be sure the plan is achievable, that it is a green plan, and not just a 'green wish'.

In our view Toronto City Council will need faster timelines, more detail, and a commitment to implement and *fully fund* its updated TransformTO plan to bring the city to net-zero by 2040.

1. Green buildings are key. We are asking you to advance the dates for several urgent changes including emissions reduction requirements for new and existing buildings so that by 2030 we truly are building green buildings.
2. The City owns Toronto Hydro. We need to require Toronto Hydro to adopt the climate mandate and be put to full use in implementing the 2040 plan.
3. With over 30% of emissions coming from transportation, electrification and active transportation are key. We need to take equitable action. That means not limited to EV incentives and chargers, but safe streets, complete streets, and support for walking cycling and affordable reliable transit.
4. We must engage citizens in meaningful involvement. Looking at recommendations 18 - 21 we suggest that in addition to an Advisory Committee that the City establish work groups corresponding to the areas of focus in the plan, for example one for buildings, one for energy and one for nature, and so on. It's going to take all of us working together to achieve the changes on the very quick timeline in the plan and citizen action can help.
5. We need a bold communication strategy. Most people in Toronto have never even heard of TransformTO. Many people do not know what they can do to respond to the climate crisis. Let's use schools libraries and community centres -existing networks – and bring in volunteers from organizations such as ours and others in the Toronto Climate Action Network

(www.tcan.ca) Meet with us and develop a communication campaign. This could be another of the ongoing work groups as proposed.

6. We urge you to take direct leadership; do not wait for the province and the federal governments. If we need emergency powers, let's take them. Climate is an even greater emergency than COVID has been. We could establish a high-level spokesperson, like a Climate Commissioner, with the power to remove barriers and make the needed changes happen. I have been made aware of legislation at the provincial level that does support greater powers at the city level on climate and I would ask that staff and councillors create a task force to look at ways to remove barriers to action.
7. We could also set up a Net Zero Task Force that would include provincial and federal representation from Toronto MP and MPP caucuses as well as councillors and staff, and citizen representatives. We are looking for very quick action so a Task Force that could meet often to develop initiatives and track progress on implementation would be the best of government working together. Let's roll up our sleeves and do this together!
8. We need to be ready to fund what's needed: spending now is a much better investment than paying the price for lack of climate action later. We have seen that in BC resulting in hundreds of deaths and severe flooding. We do not want to see that in our city, nor do we want to contribute to climate disasters in other parts of the world when we could be quickly reducing the damaging emissions. The city's budget is very tight, we know. We urge the city to look at its revenue options, ones that it already has the power to use, and ones that can be requested, to make sure we get the funds we need. The city has a special levy, separate from property tax, for transit. Maybe we need this for climate action also. Today, let's focus on passing this comprehensive and forward-looking climate plan, however when it comes to planning budgets let's make sure we don't let lack of funds stand in the way of needed action and staff hires. And let's see a carbon budget developed for the city.
9. It's essential that we apply a robust climate lens across all departments in planning and funding decisions
10. PARTNERSHIPS: we need them. The proposed non-competitive partnership with MARS offers a way to move forward on new and exciting climate initiatives. We would just caution that there need to be criteria to ensure accountability - that the projects the city partners on match the priorities and equity considerations of the city.

We are truly living through a climate emergency at this time, we just have a few years to act.

We need to do this for the city we want and need now, and for the future. We look forward to working with you to achieve this future together.

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