



January 26, 2022

*Deputation to Executive Committee re: EX29:9*

*Budgeting for the City of Toronto's Future*

Dear Mayor Tory and Councillors,

I am a long time resident of the city and for the last 20 years have been residing in Ward 12, St. Paul's.

I am co-chair of Climate Fast and for the last several years have deputed on the budget.

I see so many worthy projects go unfunded or so minimally funded as to scrape by – essential services that are always in a precarious state. I remain hopeful that we as a city can take better care of our most vulnerable residents. A more diverse and equitable set of revenue tools would help us to do that.

And as Co-Chair of ClimateFast I've always been pushing for more money for our city's climate action plan.

**Today I am asking the budget committee to commit all the financial resources required to create the planning, policy and revenue tools to support the rapid implementation of the TransformTO plan to bring GHG emissions in Toronto to Net Zero by 2040.**

I have the greatest respect for the TransformTO staff. They work very hard on our behalf. However they are constrained by a limited budget, and without substantially greater investment we will not achieve success in reaching our target.

We know it's essential to cut emissions as fast as possible to reach our 2030 target of 65% reduction in emissions and our 2040 target of Net Zero.

**Our Net Zero building emissions strategy sets out these goals:**

- : • By 2030, 50 per cent of community-wide energy comes from renewable or low-carbon sources
- By 2030, 25 per cent of commercial and industrial floor area is connected to low carbon thermal energy sources

The strategy then names a crucial step:

**“CRITICAL STEP TO REACH THE 2030 GHG REDUCTION TARGET: Accelerate a rapid and significant reduction in natural gas use – Toronto will take further action to limit the use of natural gas. Natural gas use for water and space heating represents over half of Toronto's total greenhouse gas emissions.** In addition to new buildings eliminating natural gas use through the Toronto Green Standard v.4, the Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy articulates **ambitious**

**targets to replace conventional heating systems with more efficient electric heat pumps while greening the provincial electricity grid.”**

**Incentives are crucially important** to public acceptance and implementation of the fuel switching strategy. The City of Vancouver offers a \$7000 rebate for installation of heat pumps. Multiply that by the number of homes in Toronto that will require conversion.

**Buildings should also undergo a substantial retrofit** prior to or alongside installation of heat pumps. This is a considerable effort for individual home owners to achieve. How are we going to scale it up?

We need to retrofit 100,000 buildings by 2030, that's 12,500 buildings per year.

**The slow uptake on the city's HELP program should be a clear indication that additional encouragement, and economic incentives may be required.** A 'concierge' type service for homeowners – and support for communities wishing to go about retrofits on a community-wide scale, thus accessing bulk prices and peer support - this costs staffing dollars.

**Community energy systems require large investments.** Right now the TransformTO community engagement program offers \$7500 to selected projects. However that is not enough for a capital project – that's really just to cover expenses for a small project with some staff coordination. If we want to do significant projects we need funds to invest.

**Public education and engagement is crucial.** Right now the city has a 'climate champion' program, providing a \$500 honorarium for residents to engage in a project in their community. If we were serious about this person being able to do substantial outreach and education in their ward, rather than one project, we'd be funding them for many times that amount so they could attend many events in the community and help to accelerate the uptake of climate action measures.

**We need a large-scale communication and public education strategy** as we have done for COVID – advertising in bus shelters and other outreach.

**The point is: there is a lot more we need to do.** And to quote Seth Klein, in A Good War, about the way Canada responded to the recognized war emergency, **since we are in a climate emergency we need to 'spend what it takes'**. We can't allow our progress to be restricted by slow action from other levels of government. **We need to be in charge of our own revenue streams.**

This is supported in the City's revenue options report from 2016, prepared by KPMG. It concludes with this:

“It is clear from this review that **North American peer cities use a broad range of revenue options** outside of property taxes and land transfer taxes. The cities profiled in this section use a suite of tax measures.... allowing for the flexibility to respond to changing economic and fiscal circumstances.”

**It is time for this City to introduce additional sources of revenue.** Additional sources that would help reach the city's targets, eg for modal shift to active transportation, such as a fee such as a vehicle registration tax should be considered. Other options might also be helpful with this modal shift.

One example:

Leicester is considering charging "companies with more than 10 parking spaces £550 a year per space. It could raise £450m in the next decade to invest in a new fleet of electric buses, an expanded cycle network and train station renovations."

<https://t.co/WxumBIHN6t>

<https://twitter.com/TheWarOnCars/status/1485010948008120331?s=20>

**Income tax is an equitable source of revenue, much more so than property tax. Sales tax is another option.**

We urge you to dedicate all the resources needed to ensure the timely implementation of the TransformTO Net Zero by 2040 plan.

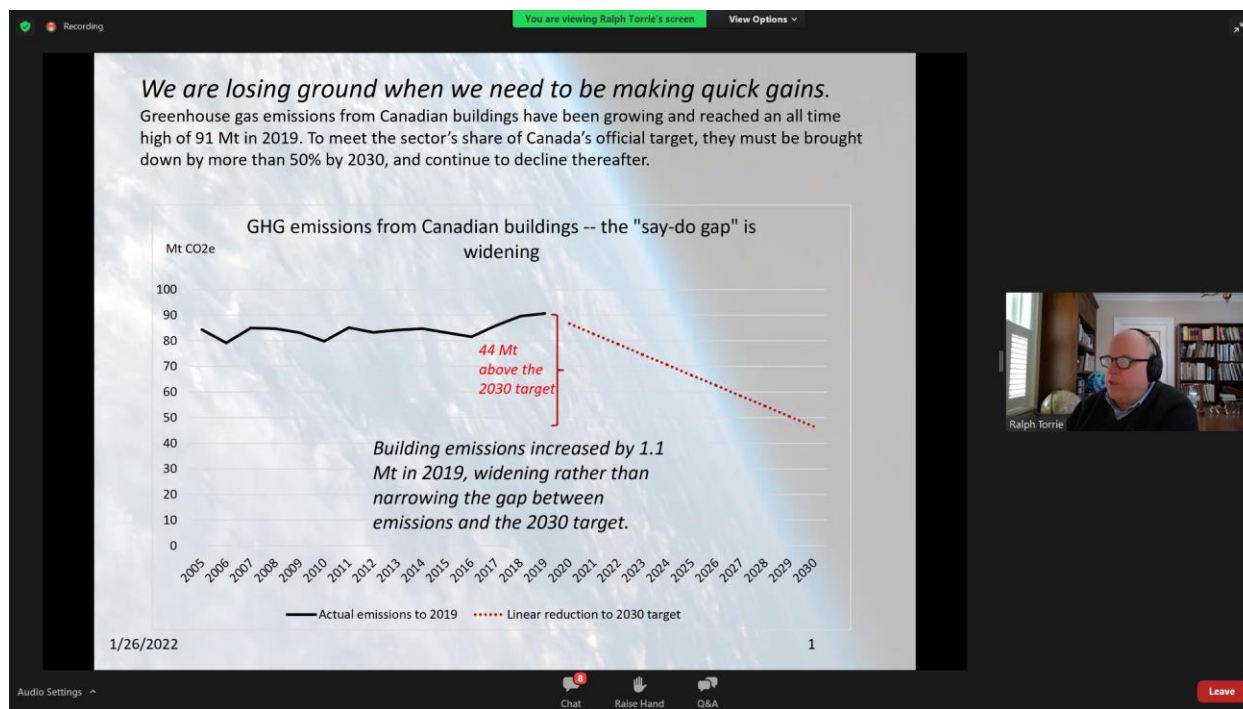
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This screenshot is from a webinar by Corporate Knights held this morning. Ralph Torrie is illustrating that building emissions are still rising (Canadian figures) rather than declining as they need to. This is to illustrate that this is a huge challenge. Just 8 years to 2030.



<https://www.corporateknights.com/earth-index/>