



January 16, 2023

To the Chair and Councillors,

Budget Committee

Re. 2023 City Budget

I am writing on behalf of the climate action group ClimateFast. I'm also a resident of Ward 11 where I'm one of the City's Climate Action Champions.

Over the past several years, I've watched the City make ambitious, intelligent plans for dealing with the increasingly urgent climate crisis. The problem I see is that the resources available for implementing these plans are in no way equal to the task of getting the city's emissions to net zero by 2040.

Recognizing that the City is dealing with one of the most difficult budget situations in its history, I've come to a number of conclusions:

1. First, there is probably no way for the City to achieve its climate goals without massive funding from higher levels of government and the private sector. How to get this funding leads to my next point:
2. The City must mobilize its residents to **demand** greater provincial and federal funding through a massive campaign to make the general population aware of the climate crisis, its causes, its consequences, and realistic solutions. While there's no need to alarm people, there's no excuse for keeping them ignorant of the consequences of inaction.
3. This citizen engagement campaign should also motivate residents to reduce their own carbon footprints by, for example, installing heat pumps, buying electric vehicles, and using transit or active transportation. It's been suggested that about 40% of carbon emissions can be eliminated through personal action.
4. Given the enormous demands on the public purse, the City must be more aggressive in generating new revenue. I support the many calls for a commercial parking levy, a municipal share of sales tax or income tax, and other revenue tools.
5. Revenues from such sources should be put specifically toward transit services which should be enhanced rather than downgraded as has been proposed in the TTC budget. TransformTO calls for **free** public transit as an important part of achieving the city's climate goals. Such revenues could also be directed toward improving the infrastructure of active transportation like improved pedestrian and cycling paths.

6. And, finally, this is no time for the City to spend money unwisely. Improved planning would reduce inefficiencies in road repair. Who hasn't seen roads dug up and repaved repeatedly and wondered why scheduling doesn't make this unnecessary? Expensive mega-projects like reconstruction of the crumbling eastern section of the Gardiner Expressway should also be reconsidered.

In closing, I want to commend the City's efforts to date to reduce its carbon emissions, but I also urge you to work harder and smarter to put in place the resources needed to reach the City's climate goal of net zero by 2040.

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