

From: [Lyn Adamson](#)
To: [Executive Committee](#)
Subject: [External Sender] ClimateFast deputation to Executive Committee. (please make public)
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August 24, 2023

RE: EX7.1
Updated Long-Term Financial Plan
CLIMATEFAST DEPUTATION

Dear members of the Executive,

My name is Lyn Adamson and I am speaking today for ClimateFast, a grassroots climate group based in Toronto committed to supporting our TransformTO Net Zero Climate Action plan.

I first want to express our gratitude for the staff report you have in front of you. It is a relief to see the stark financial picture the city faces spelled out in plain terms with some clear recommendations for action. We at ClimateFast support this report, and all of the suggested actions, and would like to suggest additional actions that we believe are needed.

New revenue tools need to be in place asap, eg in the 2024 budget -not delayed. **We need access to big sources of money because we must do big things**, we need to make big changes now. **And we need to implement the carbon budget** so we know how we are doing in terms of making decisions in line with our climate action commitment.

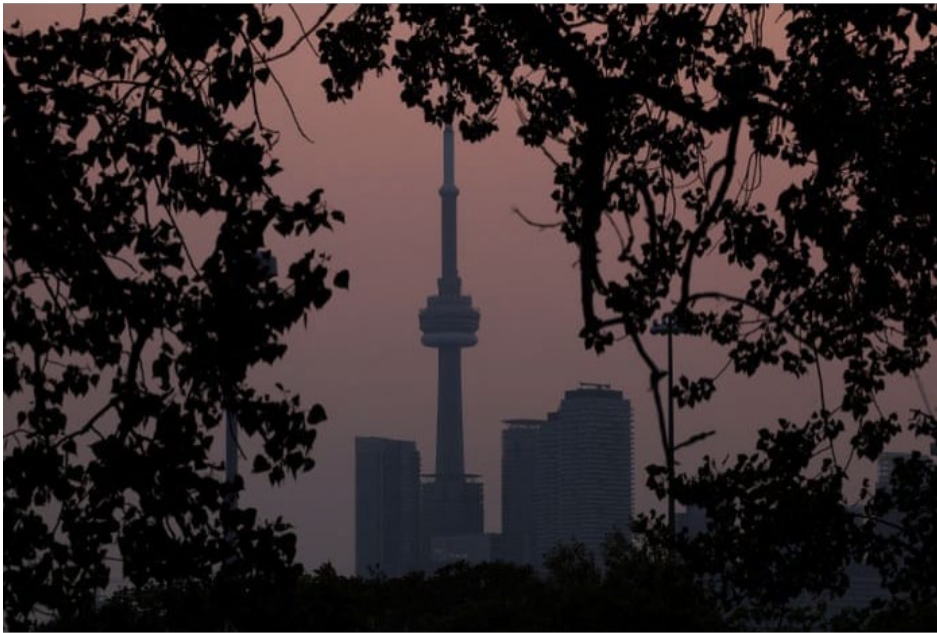
It is urgent that we continue and expand climate action in the city to achieve the targets in the Net Zero by 2040 report.

Wildfire



This this has been Canada's worst wildfire season, with hundreds of wildfires across the country, caused by a warming climate that causes greater evaporation thus drying the forests. This will keep getting worse until we cut emissions, which means we need to stop burning fossil fuels.

It could not be more important for this city to fully implement the excellent and award-winning Net Zero by 2040 plan. Cities cause 70% of GHG emissions and this summer we have seen first hand the results of delaying climate action. The impacts have been literally in our faces with smoke blanketing our city, with a huge cost to our health and our ability to live life in the outdoors as we like to do in the summer! We are experiencing the results of decades of delay in cutting emissions. The City of Toronto is Canada's largest city and we can be a climate leader.



Smoke in the city, from Cherry Beach, from the Guardian

How can cities help cut emissions? By reducing our demand - and the most effective ways to do this are spelled out in the TransformTO plan, by reducing emissions from buildings which are 55% of the source in this city, and by shifting transportation patterns from cars to walking cycling and transit to reduce the 35% of emissions caused by transportation (mostly cars)

So how do we cut housing emissions?

We need to massively scale up our retrofit programs, and institute mass conversion to heat pumps for home heating and cooling.

With regard to housing that means ramping up the pace of programs to retrofit homes, it means requiring retrofitting to be included when homes are renovated, and it means requiring green building standards in all new builds.

Therefore we appreciate point 7 especially the use of the term 'mandatory' which we believe is essential to speed up the transition we need to achieve.

And we note that when it comes to TCHC properties many units cannot be lived in because they have been allowed to fall into states of disrepair.

When the city does not maintain our infrastructure in a state of good repair it means that we waste money - as it costs much more to repair after a long time than right when the problem occurs and we cannot afford to be wasting money.

In order to meet our need for housing, **we need those units to be repaired, and while they are repaired we need to bring them up to the best green standards.**

This requires capital investment.

For example we need to go to electric heat pump technology rather than cheaper gas

furnaces. This is much more efficient and has the added benefit of providing both heating and cooling. This will pay back over time in reduced operating expenses - and in helping us move toward our climate targets and a better quality of life in the city.

So let's do the retrofits now and let's do them right.

Let's make sure the financing is there by leveraging the capital of pension funds for 'green bonds' to finance the city's capital expenditures.

This is being done in Quebec, with support from the Quebec equivalent of the OMERS pension fund.

To shift transportation patterns from cars to walking, cycling and transit we need to make it advantageous to take transit - by making it affordable, convenient and reliable. We also need to keep building bike lanes and **implementing Vision Zero** changes. Crosswalks, street design, and traffic speed are all important factors in pedestrian safety, as well as encouraging smaller lighter vehicles, which are less dangerous to pedestrians.

We need fees on parking and parking lots to provide a needed source of revenue for transit.

We also need capital investment to make the purchases we need to achieve this transition - now.

if we don't buy electric buses and subway cars our emissions will be even greater

which will worsen our financial situation and impact our quality of life. We want to live in a healthy, happy, and safe city.

We'd like to clarify with regard to the parking levy, we'd like to ensure that the parking levy applies to all large parking lots in the city.

This is an important step to take to generate revenue that can be used for the transit budget. We must encourage walking cycling and transit use and shift travel patterns away from car use if we are to achieve our emissions reduction target.

WE NEED FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT MATCHING FUNDS

This report calls on the federal and provincial governments to do their part. It is shocking to me that a recent planned purchase of new subway cars was cancelled - because funds were not matched at the federal and provincial levels. This means we are continuing to operate with cars that are too old, which means our system becomes unreliable, and sometimes even unsafe, as we saw with the recent derailment on the Scarborough RT line. Safety and reliability cannot take a back seat to penny-pinching governments, so in addition to proper allocation from other levels of government the city also needs the power to bring in additional revenue.

Pressuring the provincial government needs to be done, so withdrawing cooperation with provincial initiatives until proper financing is provided makes sense.

We also need to pressure the province NOT to proceed with expanding gas plants, including the Portlands gas plants, but instead develop renewable energy sources.

To meet our emission reduction targets we need a clean electricity grid, and we know that the federal government plans to achieve that grid by 2035, and we need our province to get on board with that plan.

ADDITIONAL REVENUE IDEAS

Many other cities have realized budgetary, health, and climate benefits by taking these steps:

- increased parking charges
- a parking levy on large lots
- a vehicle registration tax
- a congestion tax, such as New York City, and London
- increased property taxes including a surcharge on high value homes (in line with other municipalities in the province)
- increase in land transfer tax for high value homes
- increase in vacancy tax

Access to a percentage of income tax or sales tax is going to be necessary to bring in the revenue required. Income tax is a more equitable method of bringing in funds, and would not disadvantage Toronto businesses by putting them in competition with other GTA stores, or with Amazon. I

In order to tackle the housing crisis we need to **increase property taxes to a rate in line with other municipalities in the province**, and we need to find ways to leverage the wealth in this city to help provide for those most in need. The province is not helping us to pay for the mental health, addiction, and housing services we need, yet we live with an unacceptable cost in both suffering and safety,

A surcharge on the land transfer tax for properties worth \$3M is one important step, and we could also bring in an additional surcharge on property taxes of the most valuable properties in the city.

ADAPTATION

We need to recognize that the impacts of climate change are already affecting our city, and the vulnerable are the worst affected.

The need for dedicated funds for adaptation as laid out in a report by the Insurance Bureau of Canada which notes that \$5.2B per year is needed for coping with the costs of adaptation but we lack funds budgeted from any level of gov't for this.

<https://www.insdevforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Insurance-for-Climate-Adaptation-Opportunities-and-Limitations.pdf>

LONG-TERM - SUE BIG OIL

Just before COVID the Infrastructure and Environment Committee asked the City legal department to research the possibility of initiating a suit against oil and gas companies that are responsible for many of the rising costs in the city: infrastructure that is damaged by excess heat (hydro infrastructure) and the damage caused by excessive flooding. Such suits are in process in other municipalities in Canada and more broadly, and such an approach could be a long-term strategy for needed revenue, and a way to pressure big oil and gas to transition in a responsible way to renewable energy and conservation.

IN SUMMARY

We need to pull together as a team to tackle this greatest of all challenges - to pass on a living world, and a livable city, to our children. And to make sure those living in our city right now are taken care of.

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