



Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Letter to IEC

Prioritization of Green Building Standards in Ontario Building Code by Councillor Dianne Saxe

Recommendations

Councillor Dianne Saxe recommends that:

City Council reiterate its support for and request that the Government of Ontario immediately expedite the transition to the Ontario Building Code of green building standards related to the construction of buildings that are currently administered through the planning process.

Summary

Since the adoption of the Toronto Green Standard in 2006, the City of Toronto has established itself as a leader in securing sustainable performance measures for new development, including a tiered approach to requiring near zero by 2040, through the site plan process. Dramatically improved building energy performance is essential to Toronto's carbon budget and to achieving TransformTO.

In February 2023, the Government of Ontario initiated discussions with interested municipalities and other stakeholders on improving the scope and effectiveness of certain green building standards by moving them from the site plan process into the Ontario Building Code. City of Toronto staff from multiple divisions were actively engaged in this work, along with industry and other interested stakeholders. Site plan approval occurs too late in the development process, and is too limited, for optimum results in improving building energy performance and reducing operating costs.

In addition, the current process requires the applicable green standard to be triggered by the date of site plan approval, which can be many years before a building is actually constructed. This can result in new buildings being constructed that are designed to obsolete standards, and which are not appropriate to the rapid evolution of the climate crisis.

In its letter to municipalities of February 28 2023, the Government of Ontario committed to move the authority to impose green standards into the Ontario Building Code through an interim amendment "by the summer of 2023". Summer of 2023 has come and gone, with no such amendment. This delay is a serious concern, as new editions of the Ontario Building Code are issued only every five years or so, and the next edition is in the late stages of development.

Given the climate crisis, our climate commitments and the rapid evolution of building technologies, the City of Toronto urgently requires robust authority to increase the scope, timeliness and ambition of our green standards. This authority requires the Ontario Building Code amendment that the province of Ontario committed to deliver this past summer.

City Council requests that the Government of Ontario honour its February 28, 2023 commitment and expedite the necessary building code amendment as soon as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "D Saxe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of "D" being a large, stylized loop.

Councillor Dianne Saxe

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