

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM12.4	ACTION			Ward: All
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### Youth Climate Corps - by Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

#### Recommendations

Councillor Dianne Saxe, seconded by Councillor Chris Moise, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Federal Government to create a Youth Climate Corps.
2. City Council forward this item to Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Marci Ien.

#### Summary

The climate mobilization in Canada has yet to feel like a grand societal undertaking. Among the bold initiatives that would send such a signal is a [Youth Climate Corps](#). A Youth Climate Corps would train youth for careers in the well-paying green jobs of the future, and help ensure Canada has a skilled workforce for the new climate economy.

An audacious Youth Climate Corps - an invitation to the country's youth to mobilize to confront today's gravest threat - could be a transformative public program, signalling to young people and society at large that we are genuinely in climate emergency mode. It would also help Toronto address many of our other gravest challenges, including inequality, shortages of skilled labour and lack of opportunities for young people.

A Youth Climate Corps would offer two years of training and work to every person under 35 years of age who wants to be part of the solution to this generational challenge. Not a compulsory form of youth service, but an attractive one. A Youth Climate Corps would put thousands of young people to work in rapidly curbing emissions, preparing our infrastructure for its coming impacts, and responding to the emergencies we're locking in. A Youth Climate Corps would train the thousands of skilled workers that Toronto needs to build transit projects, retrofit buildings, install renewable energy, and prepare for the crazy weather to come.

Members and graduates of the Youth Climate Corps could immediately be put to work on many critical tasks needed in Toronto, such as:

1. deep retrofits to older housing;

2. construction of new net-zero buildings;
3. repairing and expanding transit infrastructure, which is being delayed by shortages of skilled labour;
4. renewable energy and storage;
5. caring for parks, street trees and other green spaces;
6. building up resilience to climate emergency events; and
7. conservation and reclamation efforts, including wetland restoration, tree-planting, and our Ravine Strategy.

A Youth Climate Corps would be an excellent investment of public funds, providing benefits to program participants, employers, and Canadian society that far outweigh the cost of the program.

#### *Increased earnings for Canadian youth*

A Youth Climate Corps would be a highly effective investment in a fairer, more hopeful community that doesn't leave so many people behind. Canadian youth are understandably concerned about their job prospects. Youth Climate Corps participants would "future proof" themselves by training for careers in the new green economy. Many of these jobs will be high-skilled and well-paying, in industries similar to those that currently require an apprenticeship or trades certificate (e.g., Red Seal trades).

The average annual wage of Canadians with an apprenticeship or trades certificate is \$59,285. [1] That amounts to \$15,850 more per year compared to someone with a high school diploma. [2] Over a 40-year career, a Youth Climate Corps graduate could make \$634,000 more than a person with a high school diploma who did not participate in the Youth Climate Corps.

Youth Climate Corps training would give disadvantaged youth a "way in" to a stable, comfortable, taxpaying future. Enlisting with the Youth Climate Corps could be just the antidote to the anxiety and helplessness that young people experience as climate disasters escalate.

#### *Additional tax revenues*

Because graduates of the Youth Climate Corps will earn considerably more, they will also pay considerably more tax to the federal and provincial/territorial governments over their working lives.

Based on the incremental income a Youth Climate Corps graduate would earn compared to a high school graduate (\$15,850 per year), the federal government would receive additional income taxes per person of up to \$2,700 per year (not including deductions or tax credits). Provincial/territorial governments could receive up to \$890 to \$2,880 per year (not including deductions or tax credits).[3]

Over a 40-year career, this is up to \$108,000 in additional revenue for the federal government, and up to \$35,600 to \$115,200 for provinces/territories. If the Youth Climate Corps creates 20,000 jobs / year for \$1 billion, it would be paid back in roughly 10 to 15 years just in additional income tax revenue.

### *A “win” for Canadian employers*

Productivity is a major challenge for Canadian businesses. Businesses benefit from greater productivity when they have a well-educated, well-trained labour force, which the Youth Climate Corps would help to create. For example, “small, medium and large businesses in every region of the country report an average return of \$1.47 for every dollar they spend on apprenticeship training, including wages, journey person time, materials and administration. Even better, they report better health and safety records, an easier time recruiting and better retention of their tradespeople.”[4]

Businesses with higher profits also pay more income tax.

### *A “win” for Canadian society*

Research shows that improving education, as the Youth Climate Corps would, results in increased innovation and economic growth; greater civic engagement, volunteerism, and charitable contributions; and reduced income inequality.[5]

In particular, the Youth Climate Corps would improve Canada’s chances in the fight of our lives by improving greenhouse gas mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. A Youth Climate Corps would help address the growing skills-shortage facing many sectors. It would also help keep Canada competitive by preparing our workforce for the new climate economy.

A Youth Climate Corps would also help to keep Canada competitive with the United States. The US government has already announced its own Youth Climate Corps. Now it’s time for Canada to do the same.

Toronto has a number of short term and part time City programs that encourage youth involvement in sustainability, such as Neighbourhood Climate Action Champions. However, none of the existing programs provide the serious upskilling that can launch a new career, as the Youth Climate Corps would.

[1] Data from 2021 Census (Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0412-01 Employment income statistics by occupation, major field of study and highest level of education: Canada](#)) adjusted for inflation using the Bank of Canada calculator (<https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>, accessed October 26, 2023).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Calculated using 2023 personal income tax brackets found at <https://www.fidelity.ca/en/insights/articles/2023-canadian-income-tax-brackets/>, accessed October 26, 2023.

[4] Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, <https://caf-fca.org/apprenticeship/for-employers/>, accessed October 27, 2023.

[5] Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement, Regulations Amending the Canada Student Financial Assistance Regulations: SOR/2019-214, June 17, 2019 <https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2019/2019-06-26/html/sor-dors214-eng.html>.

## **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM12.4