

Re: Infrastructure and Environment Committee Agenda item 2024.IE12.3
for March 27, 2024:

“Toronto's Climate Change Readiness: Updates on commitments and a refreshed mandate for coordinating resilience activities”

March 26, 2024

To the members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

The Committee's upcoming discussion of the *TransformTO Net Zero Strategy* presents an opportunity to build on Toronto's limited emissions reduction approach: The existing strategy almost exclusively targets active operational carbon emissions, and leaves out the conservation of embodied carbon within our existing buildings.

It is concerning that the City's *TransformTO Net Zero Strategy* ignores passive strategies like reducing new construction where existing facilities exist. This focus may be due to the emissions inventory referenced: The *Net Zero Strategy* considers only emissions actively released within Toronto, rather than all emissions related to Toronto consumption including production outside of the city¹. As 90% of a building's embodied carbon comes from the manufacturing process² (largely outside of Toronto) rather than the construction activities themselves, we are missing a big part of the picture here.

CELOS is currently researching how minor renovations can bring life into under-utilised community buildings for the least carbon cost: minimizing both the use of new materials and the demolition of materials already in place. A strong example of a current high-carbon project is the redevelopment of the Wallace Emerson Community Center. While the new sports complex will undoubtedly follow the

¹ The *TransformTO Net Zero Strategy* references the SBEI (Sector-Based Emissions Inventory) rather than the broader CBEI (Consumption-based Emissions Inventory).

² Statistic from the City of Toronto 2019 Buildings and Linear Infrastructure Emissions Analysis, which uses CBEI figures.



Toronto Green Standard, the demolition of the existing concrete community center equals the waste of tons of embodied carbon already in place, to be completely replaced (instead of added to) with another building – using many tons of new material.

Appendices 2 and 3 for the upcoming agenda item refer to research into the impact of embodied carbon, it is encouraging to see that it is part of the discussion. Our question is: How can voices for the conservation and revitalisation of existing spaces, especially community spaces, get more of a place at the table?

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Antczak M.Arch.

CELOS researcher

