



May 27, 2024

Infrastructure & Environment Committee

Re: 14.3 and 14.4

Dear Chair and Councillors,

I am speaking on behalf of ClimateFast in support of items 14.3 and 14.4. We are also here to urge councillors to go further, faster. The current report falls far short of what is required.

Safe cycling and pedestrian infrastructure is essential to achieving TransformTO's emission reduction target of 75% of trips of 5 km or less by active transportation by 2030. We are not currently on track to reach our target of 45% of emissions reduction by 2025. Our emissions are increasing, not decreasing, which is very alarming. The City's figures they show a 4% increase in 2021 rather than a cut. The Atmospheric Fund provides more recent figures showing that emissions rose 8% in 2022 rather than declining by 9% to be in line with our target. (taf.carbon.ca)

**If we are rapidly falling this far behind, how are we going to make the much more ambitious target of 65% reduction by 2030?**

I am a Co-Chair of the city's Climate Advisory Group which is working with the city staff to achieve our targets. I am speaking now for ClimateFast with this message which has to be absolutely clear: **we are not going to meet our targets on the path we are on now.**

With regard to our transportation targets we need to seriously address the challenge of modal shift. **We need to accelerate action on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to encourage people to walk cycle and take transit rather than drive.** The city is unbelievably congested with auto traffic and redesigning our streets to favour alternative modes is really essential for a healthier city. By healthier I am speaking of our physical health, mental health, and doing our part for the health of the planet.

At this time temperature rise is happening so quickly around the world that scientists are very alarmed. We know that after a 2 C rise tipping points will kick in that will make it impossible to go back to where we are now. Now is the moment when urgent action to reduce fossil fuel reliance is absolutely essential. We are going to feel this in our city with extreme weather, heat waves, smoke from forest fires, and flooding - and so we must act.

Given the urgency of modal shift to achieve climate targets it is disappointing to see that the staff report is recycling much of what has been in previous plans and is not nearly as ambitious as we need to be. The 2025-27 Bike Plan again calls for 100 km of bike lanes over three

years. 46 km of these installations – including 43 km on-street – were recycled from the 2022-24 plan. We need 150 km of bike lane installation every year – not 100 over 3 years.

Suburban areas are especially neglected and most in need. We urge you to prioritize extending the Bloor-Danforth-Kingston bike lanes to the city limits. In addition, the West Scarborough Rail Path should be accelerated, not delayed.

But these aren't the only places that this plan falls short. There are many routes that have been delayed and these have been detailed by other deputants.

We urge the city to prioritize the installation of the Avenue Rd bike lanes. There have been too many tragic and preventable deaths on this road. There must not be any delays to the Avenue Road bicycle lanes. This installation is crucial to the integrity of the network and therefore to the achievement of our target. We urge you to take this not only from Bloor to Davenport, but all the way to St. Clair.

If we are to realize the potential contribution to modal shift that bike commuting can bring we need much faster implementation of biking infrastructure. We know that safe cycling infrastructure supports and encourages cyclists of all ages! Families, recent arrivals to Toronto, new cyclists and senior cyclists like myself. A new study shows health benefits for seniors, the link is below.

We understand that the city is tight on funds. So it becomes extremely important then to prioritize FAST action on the steps that we can take that will help us save money and save lives -steps that will reduce our emissions just as fast as possible.

The city established the Net Zero by 2040 plan in 2021 in response to the climate emergency, declaration in 2019. This was our response to the amazing organizing of young people in this city bringing tens of thousands of people into the streets demanding climate action. **We cannot let ourselves fall short. The time for action is now.**



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"A new study finds people who are in the habit of riding a bike are significantly less likely to have osteoarthritis and experience pain in their knees by age 65, compared to people who don't bike."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2024/05/20/1251561467/biking-knee-pain-longevity-arthritis>